Going Organic: A Report on the Opportunities for Organic Agriculture in Saskatchewan

Presented to

Premier Lorne Calvert
September 2007

SASKATCHEWAN

By
Lon Borgerson, MLA Saskatchewan Rivers
Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming

Going Organic: A Report on the Opportunities for Organic Agriculture in Saskatchewan

Presented to

Premier Lorne Calvert
September 2007

By
Lon Borgerson, MLA Saskatchewan Rivers
Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming

Letter to the Premier

To the Honourable Lorne Calvert
Premier of Saskatchewan

Dear Premier,

I have truly enjoyed my appointment as your Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming. I thank you for engaging me in this exciting and rewarding work.

My appointment has been welcomed by the organic sector. It signals the value our government places on organic farming and its future in this province. I have therefore been received warmly by everyone I've met, including organic farmers, processors and marketers. These meetings are listed in Appendix A.

Although I have followed the organic movement quite closely and have advocated for this sector in government, I must admit that this work has been more complex than I previously thought. With the various certification and accreditation bodies, associations, co-operatives, commissions and directorates, there is a fair degree of fragmentation. Add to this the geographic separations and personalities, and it can get confusing. As one person said to me, "*The organic sector is like a herbal garden, rich in its diversity.*"

Having said that, the foundational thinking or the underpinning of every conversation has been the same. Organics is not just about economic sustainability. It is about environmental, social, and even spiritual sustainability. This is what connects almost everyone in the sector.

I acknowledge and thank all of those who have shared their time and thoughts with me. I especially thank Shannon Urbaniak for her knowledge, commitment and invaluable assistance. I am so grateful for the learnings and friendships that have resulted from this work.

Premier Calvert, I am pleased and proud to present my final report on organic agriculture in Saskatchewan.

Lon Borgerson, MLA
Saskatchewan Rivers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

1.0 SASKATCHEWAN IN AN ORGANIC WORLD 4
- 1.1 CANADA IN THE WORLD 4
- 1.2 SASKATCHEWAN'S ORGANIC INDUSTRY 5
- 1.3 CURRENT ORGANIZATION IN THE SASKATCHEWAN ORGANIC SECTOR 6
- 1.4 CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE TARGETS 7
- 1.5 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE 9

2.0 MAKING THE TRANSITION 12
- 2.1 TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM 13
- 2.2 MENTORSHIP IN ORGANICS 14

3.0 CERTIFICATION 16
- 3.1 CERTIFICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP 16
- 3.2 NATIONAL ORGANIC CERTIFICATION STANDARD 18

4.0 ORGANIC PRODUCTION 19
- 4.1 SASKATCHEWAN PRODUCTION MANUAL 19
- 4.2 WEB-BASED SUPPORT 19
- 4.3 SAF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE SUPPORT 20

5.0 ORGANIC PROCESSING 22
- 5.1 ORGANIC CROPS 23
- 5.2 ORGANIC LIVESTOCK 25

6.0 ORGANIC RESEARCH AND EDUCATION 26
- 6.1 ORGANIC AGRICULTURE CENTRE OF CANADA (OACC) 26
- 6.2 COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIO-RESOURCES 26
- 6.3 SASKATCHEWAN ORGANIC COMMISSION (SOC) 28
- 6.4 REGIONAL COLLEGES 29
- 6.5 K-12 EDUCATION 30
- 6.6 PRINCE ALBERT CONSERVATION LEARNING CENTRE 31
- 6.7 BACK TO THE FARM RESEARCH FOUNDATION 32

7.0 MARKETING FOR EXPORT 33
- 7.1 MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES 34
- 7.2 ORGANIC TRADE FAIR 36
- 7.3 NEXTRADE FINANCE 37

8.0 MARKETING LOCALLY: REDUCING FOOD MILES 39
- 8.1 FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY 41
- 8.2 FARMERS MARKETS AND COMMUNITY ASSISTED AGRICULTURE 42
- 8.3 WEB-BASED RESOURCES 43
- 8.4 AWARENESS AND PROMOTION OF SASKATCHEWAN ORGANIC FOOD 43

9.0 ORGANIC FARMING AND RURAL REVITALIZATION 45
- 9.1 INVITING NEW ORGANIC FARMERS 48

10. CONCLUSION 52

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS 53

REFERENCES 56

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS ● EVENTS ● INTERVIEWS 59

APPENDIX B: ORGANIC INDUSTRY STRUCTURE 63

...with one third of the organic farmers in Canada and 60% of the land in this nation which is dedicated to organic farming, this province will lead the way in organic production. Upon completion of work now underway, initiatives will be introduced to expand the production, processing and marketing of local, organic food...With our connection to the land and our commitment to environmental stewardship, Saskatchewan clearly demonstrates it is down to earth, with only the sky as our limit. (2006 Speech from the Throne)

INTRODUCTION

You really have to look for it, but once you meet one person, you're in a network. The majority of young people who are interested in agriculture are definitely young people who are looking at organic or at least considering it. (Kalissa Regier, Laird)

This is an exciting time for organic agriculture. In farm country, more and more conventional farmers are making the difficult transition to organic farming - for economic reasons, yes, to escape from the cost-price squeeze that is at the root of the present farm crisis, and for environmental, health and social reasons, as well. The number of organic farmers in Saskatchewan has increased sixfold in 10 years.

At the grocery store, it is easy to believe there is an organic revolution occurring The organic section and selection is growing, with more and more organic food on the shelves - cereals, soups, juices, coffee, flour, sugar, and even pet food. In the produce department, you will now find separate islands of organic fruits and vegetables. It's no surprise that organic food sales are increasing by as much as 28 per cent annually (Anne Macey, Retail Sale of Certified Organic Food Products in Canada, in 2006, 2007). All over the world, consumers are indicating a preference for organic produce.

Incidents of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and food contamination have fueled some of this interest. From young families to baby boomers, there is a growing concern about food safety and security. These concerns have increased the demand for organic food, particularly when it is locally grown. With the highest demand in the 25-34 age bracket, a growing number of consumers are willing to pay extra for organic food. And now, with large retailers like Walmart, Costco and Safeway entering the marketplace, organics is becoming more than just a niche opportunity.

At the government level, there is growing recognition that organic agriculture is part of a green agenda. The federal government has just approved a national organic standard with a "Canadian Organic" logo that will undoubtedly accelerate the demand for organic food. In Saskatchewan, we have signaled our confidence in the future of organic agriculture in

our 2006 Speech from the Throne, and through my appointment by the Premier as Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming.

My role as Legislative Secretary has been to serve as a liaison between the organic sector and government, and to recommend initiatives that might support, enhance and expand organic agriculture in Saskatchewan. My work has been guided by certain principles:

- **It builds on the knowledge of our elders**. As someone who has grown up on a Saskatchewan farm and has worked with Aboriginal people for 25 years, I know how important it is to listen to and learn from our seniors and elders. I was therefore honoured to consult with organic pioneers like Elmer Laird of Davidson, as I prepared this report.

- **It builds on the optimism and energy of young farmers**. I am inspired by the confidence and enthusiasm of young, organic farmers like Kalissa Regier of Laird or Blake Hunter of Birch Hills, who see rural Saskatchewan as a great place for young people to live, work and build a future.

- **It is both qualitative and quantitative**. This report draws on numerous studies and surveys – provincial, national and international – for its statistical or quantitative data. It also relies on my own research background in qualitative methodology: recorded and informal interviews, anecdotes, case studies and photography.

- **It is a collective creation**. I have approached this work as a process of listening to participants and incorporating their ideas into a public presentation. The report weaves together the thoughts and ideas I have heard from organic growers, processors, researchers, marketers, and consumers.

I have therefore had the great privilege of sitting down with organic farmers from Maymont to Marysburg, from Wakaw to White Fox, from Kenaston to Kelvington, usually over a kitchen table, but sometimes in a local hall or café or even sitting on stumps in a backyard. I have met representatives of the various certification groups and the good people at the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC). I've had tours of the North West Producer facility in Maymont, Poplar Valley Organic Farms in Zenon Park, Galarneau Organic Farms in Radville and the Food Centre and POS in Saskatoon. And, of course, I've joined in on Field Days, or as I call them, "Crop Circles."

Everywhere, I've found a spirit of excitement, enthusiasm and creativity, and of breaking new ground that I hope to convey in this report. Here in Saskatchewan, we have the energy, the people, and the land to create a world model for organic agriculture. The intent of this report is to suggest how we can build on this potential and dramatically expand organics in this province, from seed to shelf.

My recommendations generally follow the cycle of organic farming: transition, certification, production, processing, research, education and marketing. I make recommendations to government for supporting, encouraging and expanding the organic industry in this province, recognizing that increased production must go hand-in-hand with increased processing and marketing.

This report is certainly about an incredible economic opportunity, but it is also about the environmental and social wealth that organic farming can offer our province. As we address climate change and rural renewal, organic agriculture can build on the pioneering efforts of our grandparents to leave a sustainable legacy for our grandchildren.

Lon Borgerson, MLA Saskatchewan Rivers
Legislative Secretary for Organic Farming

1.0 SASKATCHEWAN IN AN ORGANIC WORLD

Ray has always said, in our long married life, it isn't to make money but to be comfortable. It's good to have money but you can be comfortable in other ways – to be happy, to have no stress, to be healthy. Money helps, but for the three years that we didn't have much money, when we didn't know where to sell our organics, had no contacts, no money coming in...that was tough. But we managed and you always learn so much at a time like that. (Vicky Bauml, Marysburg)

How odd that the industrial agriculture of the last fifty years is considered conventional, while those who are rediscovering natural systems are now called alternative. (Fields of Plenty by Michael Ableman p 58*)*

1.1 Canada in the World

Organic agriculture is a whole system approach based upon a set of processes resulting in a sustainable ecosystem, safe food, good nutrition, animal welfare and social justice. Organic production therefore is more than a system of production that includes or excludes certain inputs. (IFOAM, 2002)

Canada is one of 120 countries that practice organic agriculture. According to 2006 statistics from the International Federation for Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), there are about 625,000 organic farms worldwide. Nearly one-fifth are in Mexico, followed by both developed and developing countries: Indonesia, Italy, Philippines, Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya. According to IFOAM, there were 8,035 organic farms in the United States and 3,673 in Canada, placing us 30th in the world.

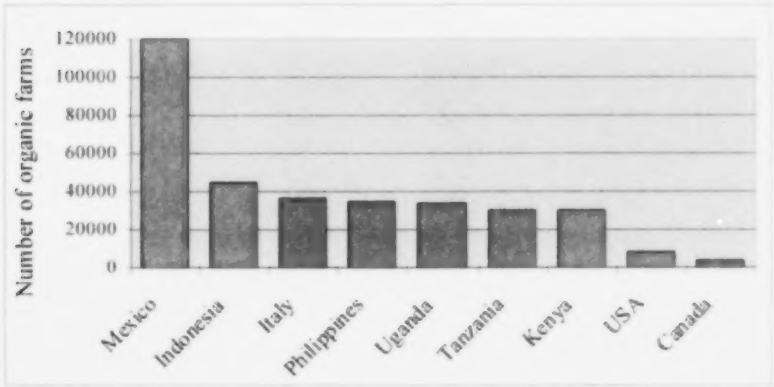


Figure 1: Number of Organic Farms by Country (2006)

There were 31 million hectares of land under world organic production in 2006, with over 12 million hectares in Australia, followed by China, Argentina, Italy, the United States, Brazil and Germany. Canada ranked in 13th place with 488,000 hectares under organic production.

Country	Land under organic production (ha)
Australia	12,000,000
China	3,400,000
Argentina	2,800,000
Italy	954,000
USA	889,000
Brazil	887,000
Germany	767,000
Canada	488,000

Table 1: Land under organic production (ha) by country

There are only three countries that have organic production above 10 per cent: Liechtenstein (26.4%), Austria (13.5%), and Switzerland (11.3%). Canada is far down the list at 0.72 per cent, with the United States at 0.22 per cent.

Global sales of organic production are estimated at CAD $24 billion. Canada's annual retail sales of organic products are estimated at $1 billion. Our export sales are worth more than $63M, divided almost equally between the United States and the European Union, with five per cent being exported to Japan.

These statistics tell us that we have relatively few organic farms in Canada, with farm sizes generally larger than in most other countries and a very small proportion under organic production. With the highest demand occurring in North America and with domestic consumption expected to grow 20.6 per cent a year from 2006 to 2015, these statistics suggest a need for increased domestic production to meet future demand.

1.2 Saskatchewan's Organic Industry

Organic agriculture is a holistic system of production designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people. (SOD Production Manual 2000)

Statistics Canada's 2006 Census of Agriculture provides some dramatic numbers that have surprised nearly everyone in the organic sector. The Census shows 3,555 certified organic farms, which is consistent with other surveys, but it also reports 11,937 farms that produce "organic, but not certified" commodities. With another 640 that are in transition, the total number of organic farms in Canada jumps to 6.8 per cent of all farms: 15,511 in all!

For Saskatchewan, the census is equally dramatic: 1,181 certified operations, 184 in transition and another 1,088 uncertified. The cumulative total of 2,453 doubles the number of organic operations we originally thought we had. It tells us that organic operations may make up not 2.7 per cent, but 5.5 per cent of this province's farms. If true, this has great significance for agricultural policy and research priorities.

Most of our organic farms are field crop operations, with wheat as the largest commodity (63,000 hectares), followed by flax, oats, lentils, peas and barley. According to Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) there are 92 organic livestock operations, two thirds of which raise cattle (over 7,000 in all). The remainder raise pigs, poultry, bison, sheep, elk and goats. We have 12 organic vegetable operations in the province and three organic orchards. We have nearly 100 organic processors and handlers: 56 seed/grain/feed, 15 handlers/distributors/traders, and 21 manufacturers.

Saskatchewan is home to one-third of the certified organic farmers in Canada, and 60 per cent of the nation's land under organic production. We supply 75 per cent of Canada's total production of organic grains and oilseeds. We lead the country in organic production.

1.3 Current Organizations in the Saskatchewan Organic Sector

■ Canadian Organic Growers (COG)
COG is a national organization based in Ontario, with members located throughout Canada. The mission statement of COG is "*To lead local and national communities towards sustainable organic stewardship of land, food and fiber while respecting nature, upholding social justice and protecting natural resources.*" COG publishes a quarterly magazine, sponsors organic research, provides numerous reference materials and works with other organizations and governments on policy matters. COG has local chapters in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and the Yukon. COG also has an affiliation with the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN) and Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC). In Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate represents the local chapter of COG.

■ Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD)
"*Saskatchewan Organic Directorate is the umbrella organization that unites the province's producers, processors, buyers, traders, certifiers and consumers of certified food and fibre.*" SOD is incorporated as a non-profit membership organization. Its mission statement is "*To champion the development of organic agriculture in a democratic manner.*" SOD has a website that provides information on its organization and activities. The organization also provides a forum for bringing together groups or individuals to respond to issues in the organic sector. Recent activities include, among other things, a Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) Program / Canada-Saskatchewan Crop Insurance research committee, participation in the Local Food Project (LOFO) and organizing the Organic Connections Conference. SOD has also provided leadership in the publication and upcoming revision of an organic production manual. SOD supports initiatives such as the Saskatchewan Organic Commission (SOC), studies such as the Organic Training Needs Assessment, and the work of the Organic Agriculture Protection Fund.

In 2003, an organizational review committee was brought together to evaluate the needs of the Saskatchewan organic sector. It identified the need for a protocol for addressing policy and procedural issues and outlined a number of organizational alternatives. A re-organization initiative was undertaken which included by-law changes and an increase in

profile for the organization. SOD reports that this effort has "extensively rejuvenated the organization." However, it lacks the administrative capacity to respond to the rapid growth that is occurring in organics. SOD has indicated to government that the success of the organic movement, although welcome, has created demands that are hard to meet.

SOD plays a central role in supporting, promoting and advancing the organic industry in this province. It participates in a SAF sponsored Organic Forum, and lobbies government on behalf of the organic sector. SOD currently receives project funding, which includes a SOD/SAF fund of $125,000 for 2005-2008. As the leading provincial association for organic agriculture, it is important that it receives predictable core funding from government to carry out its activities.

Recommendation: That the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD) receive core funding of $200,000/year to administer its work of serving organic producers and processors in Saskatchewan.

1.4 Current Trends and Future Targets

"*Converting to organic farming is an important and long-term decision, both economically and personally. Farmers, therefore, need to know that signals from politicians and governments are serious and predictable. Experiences from the development of the organic sector in Norway clearly show how important this is. The many changes in the organic subsidy system from 1998 to 2000 created uncertainty about the system. Consequently, many farmers did not take the risk of converting, resulting in a low conversion rate. In 2000, the Norwegian Parliament set a goal that 10% of the total agricultural area should be under organic cultivation by 2010... While the 10% goal did not result in any marketable economic consequences for the farmers, there has been a substantial growth in the number of farmers converting to organic production. The setting of the political goal has also had a positive influence on the retailer's and the food-processing industry's attitude towards organic agriculture*" (Kristin Orland, in Organic Agriculture Sustainability, Markets and Policies 2003 p 342)

There is an incredible window of opportunity for organic farmers in this province. The evidence can be found on the shelves of the local supermarket. According to the data provided by the Neilsen Company (2006), Canadian supermarkets sold $412 million worth of certified organic food in 2006 - a 28 per cent jump in growth in one year! Neilsen estimates $175 million in sales through smaller grocery stores, warehouse clubs and specialty stores. Information from industry sources indicate another $330 million from large natural food store chains and health food stores. All of this amounts to a conservative estimate of $1 billion dollars in organic food sales last year. Market analysts say that the demand for organics is no anomaly; the trend-line is steady and strong. Organics are here to stay.

Consumers have spoken and the big retailers are responding, each launching its own line of organic products, each competing for a share of a growing organic market. The question for our province is this: will this demand be met by imported organic food or by our own organic farmers?

The intent of this report is to provide recommendations/strategies that will enable our farmers to benefit from this window of opportunity before it closes. The following chapters propose initiatives to dramatically increase organic production in Saskatchewan, recognizing that this can only occur if there is a corresponding increase in research and education, processing and marketing. Otherwise, organic farming will be subject to the same economic pressures as conventional farming, with similar results – smaller margins, larger farms, fewer families.

This report recognizes that economic sustainability can contribute to social sustainability. Organic farming is primarily the domain of small and medium sized farms. Therefore, the more organic farms we have, the more we can retain, and perhaps, regain rural population. Chapter 9 of this report therefore presents organic farming as a rural development strategy – one way of renewing and revitalizing rural Saskatchewan. This is another window of opportunity for organic agriculture. Within this report are recommendations for expanding organic agriculture in Saskatchewan so that we, as a province, may benefit from these economic and social windows of opportunity.

Beyond the economic and social promise presented by organic agriculture, there is a third window of opportunity – perhaps the most important of all because of its global implications. This lies in its contributions to the environment. By definition, a farm can only be certified as organic if it meets stringent environmental standards. Stewardship and biodiversity are central to organic farming. But, I believe it is important to assess, early in this report, the role organic farming can play in addressing this planet's greatest environmental challenge: climate change. The message in the following section is as simple as this: *we have to grow more of our own food.*

This report therefore makes recommendations for expanding organic agriculture in this province so that it might benefit from these economic, social and environmental windows of opportunity.

When organic farmers, processors and marketers are asked to consider targets for future production, they usually hesitate to give a response. "Too many variables" is a common reply. There are indeed many variables: global warming, genetic engineering, peak oil, biofuel production, as well as the historic variables of commodity prices, freight rates, fuel costs and, of course, weather. Nevertheless, the setting of targets can send a signal of confidence and create an exciting "ripple effect." With countries such as Norway, Germany and Brazil setting targets for organic production, it is useful to have a target for Saskatchewan that is both realistic and challenging. The following recommendation is made with these current trends in mind.

Recommendation: That Saskatchewan set a goal of having 10 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers in organic production by 2015.

1.5 Organic Agriculture and Climate Change

I want to see my kids inherit a better place. We are charged with creating a happier, healthier place on this earth for our children, so let's work together and let's make that happen. (Joseph Bourgault, St. Brieux)

Intense droughts, heat waves and forest fires. Storm surges, flooding and landslides. Glaciers and ice caps retreating leaving millions of people without water. Crop yields dropping, leaving malnutrition, disease and social unrest……

This may sound like a disaster movie, but it's not. It is based on a 2-5 C° increase in global temperatures – which is what the world's top climate change scientists predict, if we don't drastically cut our greenhouse gases. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has issued two recent reports and they are firm in their message: our climate is changing rapidly and we are the cause.

For ages, as the sun's rays have hit the earth, about 70 per cent has been absorbed by gases trapped in our atmosphere. This solar energy has heated the earth and made it possible for us to live here. (Otherwise our global temperatures would be 30-33 C° colder). But now, more and more solar radiation is being trapped by a dramatic increase in greenhouse gases (GHGs) and the planet is heating up.

For Saskatchewan, the short term effects of climate change may seem beneficial. After all, who can argue with warmer winters and longer growing seasons? As the farm belt shifts north, agriculture in this province may have twenty to thirty years of increased productivity. In the long-term, however, warmer temperatures will increase evaporation and dissolve glaciers, leaving us with water shortages and droughts. Ultimately, this is both a local and global crisis that can only be addressed by simultaneously reducing our use of fossil fuels and the greenhouse gases they create.

What are these GHGs? The three most significant are carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), and nitrous oxide (NO_2). Carbon dioxide comes primarily from burning fossil fuels (oil, gas, natural gas, coal). These CO_2 emissions make up 60 per cent of our greenhouse gases, and stay in the atmosphere for up to two centuries. Methane is next, at 15-20 per cent. It comes from garbage dumps, coal mining, natural gas production and livestock. The third big culprit is nitrous oxide at six per cent, most of which comes from

nitrogen fertilizers. It has 200-300 times the GHG effect of CO_2 and stays in the atmosphere for 120-150 years. Together, these and other GHGs are trapping more and more heat in our atmosphere and raising global temperatures to crisis levels.

Agricultural practices are a major contributor to global warming. Enormous quantities of carbon dioxide have been released into the atmosphere as a result of changes in land use: clearance of forests for crops and pasture, conversion of natural ecosystems into farmland, soil erosion by water or wind, mechanization, grain drying, intensive cultivation.

In Saskatchewan, agriculture contributes 15 per cent of our greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 10 per cent in Canada and the rest of the world. Fossil fuels play an essential role in conventional agriculture. For example natural gas is used for the production of fertilizers; diesel and gasoline for tillage and transportation. We export most of the food we grow and import most of the food we eat, releasing carbon dioxide over thousands of "food miles." One way to address climate change is to reduce our food miles - the distance food travels from the seed to the shelf.

Although the mitigation of climate change is not yet an explicit goal, organic farming offers a more favourable energy balance than conventional agriculture. It is a diverse and site-specific sector, which makes monitoring and impact assessments costly and difficult, but IFOAM research indicates that organic systems use 30-70 per cent less energy per unit of land, depending on location and crop. Organic agriculture can play a major role in lowering carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide emissions and, at the same time, sequestering carbon. This is due to the following reasons:

■ Overall, organic agriculture emits less carbon dioxide than conventional agriculture because many of the inputs are generated on the farm and do not require processing or long distance transportation. Soil fertility is maintained through organic manures and legume ploughdowns instead of energy-demanding synthetic fertilizers. On the livestock side, most organic farms are mixed farms, with most animal feed obtained internally or locally, which again reduces transportation and the environmental costs associated with moving agricultural goods.

Organic farming also plays a significant role in sequestering carbon dioxide. Soil organic carbon (SOC) is regularly added to the soils through long and diversified crop rotations, legume cropping, ploughdowns, and the systematic recycling of organic waste. These are longstanding traditions in organic agriculture, part of a larger goal of environmental sustainability.

■ As for methane, organic agriculture faces the same challenge as conventional agriculture. Twenty-five per cent of CH_4 comes from the decomposition of manure, and these methane emissions can be mitigated by promoting high biological activity in the soil and carefully managing ruminant diet. There is also the potential to capture excess CH_4 and use it to generate electricity, which will both reduce GHG emissions and help meet on-farm energy needs.

■ Nitrous oxide emissions are largely a consequence of losses or overdoses (over-application) as nitrogen is applied to the soil. NO_2 emissions are minimized in organic agriculture because no synthetic N-fertilizers are used. Instead, nitrogen is added to the soil through a natural process of legume cropping and green manures. This provides the greatest area of advantage for organic agriculture as we search for ways to reduce greenhouse gases.

In conventional agriculture, conservation tillage is largely promoted to hold moisture and reduce carbon losses by oxidation. This technology combines minimum tillage with herbicides and herbicide-resistant GMO crops, both of which are prohibited in organic agriculture. These practices produce gains in soil organic carbon, or carbon sequestration, but they are offset by increased nitrous oxide emissions. Organic farming can reduce GHG emissions and create sinks for atmospheric greenhouse gases. As well, the relatively small scale of organic farming operations and the integration of crop and livestock operations result in tight nutrient cycles and minimal energy losses. As conservation tillage is integrated into organic systems, the carbon advantage will become even greater.

Organic agriculture is the only strategy that offers a comprehensive and transparent framework aiming at more sustainability in land use and climate management. Its principles are in line with climate protection. The standards set are superior in their impact on climate protection and instead of being informal as under conventional agriculture, the standards are compulsory. Last, but not least, there is a well functioning mechanism of inspection and certification that guarantees compliance of principles and standards. (Kotschi and Muller-Samann 2004, p 36)

Finally, when organic farmers talk about climate change, the conversation inevitably moves to renewable energy. After all, environmental sustainability is a basic principle of the organic agriculture movement and this includes goals of energy efficiency and self-sufficiency. There is therefore a keen interest in solar modules and micro wind turbines for on-farm electrical needs, as well as discussion around renewable substitutes for fossil fuels: biogas and biomass for heating, cooling and electrical generation; biofuels for transportation. Renewable energy technologies provide great opportunities for the organic agriculture sector to benefit from climate change mitigation while simultaneously reducing GHG emissions.

2.0 MAKING THE TRANSITION

I am going to seed wheat organically and I thought, "Oh my God, this is not good! Nothing's growing!" We had weeds and a couple of wheat plants...What's going on? Why isn't this working? Then somebody told me, "Your land is sort of dead. It's mined out. You need to put in alfalfa ...So we did and the soil got built up and then we put in wheat and I thought, "Holy smokers, nice wheat! Clean!"... I thought, "Yes, it can be done." And the neighbours were just shocked: "You must have treflon residues."... From three years ago? I doubt it. And then we never looked back. (Paul L'Heureux, White Fox)

I would discourage anybody from trying to transition into organics because they were struggling too hard as conventional farmers. If they were failing as conventional farmers and they're in debt right up to their eyeballs, my opinion is, if you are trying to transition into organic farming it will probably finish you off. You go through some years where you wind up with some low crop yields because you've gone away from your fertilizing and you still have to sell that crop as a conventional crop because it's in transition. So you've got low yields and low prices on some of your land as you're transitioning. If you weren't struggling before, you're sure going to struggle.....it's not the panacea that some might think that it's going to be "Oh I don't have to pay fertilizer and chemical and that's going to solve all of my problems. If I could just get that big monkey off of my back we could just go organic and we'd be fine." I don't think so! That hasn't been our experience, it's actually been tough on our operation to transition and we were a solid well financed operation in the first place. (Gerald Dagenais, Marcelin)

Organic agriculture may provide economic, social and environmental opportunities, but they don't come easy. Organic farmers are quick to concede that there are many obstacles to overcome, beginning with that initial decision to "go organic."

Typically, conventional farmers must adhere to a three-year transition period before they can qualify for organic certification. This can be a difficult period, for a number of reasons:

■ First, there is a mindset that goes along with conventional farming. The longer someone has farmed with chemicals, the more difficult it is to conceive of farming without them. Some organic farmers have likened this to an addiction. If they transition their farm all at once, rather than field by field, they refer to it as going "cold turkey." To many conventional farmers, this may be an inappropriate metaphor, but it does speak to the mindset that farmers must overcome if they want to make the transition to organic farming. It involves a transformation in farming practice that many farmers are simply not willing to consider, especially if they have farmed conventionally for a long time.

When older farmers are asked if they would make the shift to organics, you will often get the response, "*I've been farming too long to change now.*"

■ Organic production requires an abrupt shift in management practice. There is the promise of premium prices at the end of the three years, but in order to maintain soil fertility and control weeds, diseases and insects, farmers must abandon the prescriptive nature of farming with chemicals and adopt new techniques and technology. This can be a complex and intimidating challenge, described by one organic farmer as "a trapeze without a net" - no chemical controls and, for three seasons, no organic premiums.

■ In the event of crop failure, farm support programs may be problematic for farmers in transition, although the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) and the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) Program are now in the process of adapting their programs to organic production.

■ Finally, there can easily be a sense of isolation. Many organic farmers started off as the first in their neighbourhood and had to deal with curiosity, criticism and even ridicule from neighbours. Over the years, as organic farming has spread and prospered, these attitudes have certainly shifted, but most organic farmers still operate in geographic isolation from each other. A mapping of organic farms in Saskatchewan indicates they are broadly scattered around the province, with only a few small pockets here and there.

With these uncertainties and deterrents, many farmers are understandably hesitant to make the transition to organic. It is therefore important to reduce the risk for those who do. As the Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment (2006) clearly found, transition to organic farming is "*an intense period requiring support.*"

2.1 Transitional Support Program

The first few years can be very challenging because the farmer's learning a new management strategy. You've got all these balls in the air at the same time, and if you don't have all the tools you used to have, that can make you very nervous. Over time, you really see an organic system as a system and the puzzle fits together...We're increasingly hearing from farmers who say they need help during the time of transition...We've been talking about what it would make sense for us to do as a public agency. (Meg Moynihan, organic and diversification specialist with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture)

EU members have made the transition to organic agriculture a critical component of their agricultural policies. European countries like the Netherlands, Great Britain, Norway, Germany, Denmark, France and Austria have created national programs to encourage and assist farmers to make the transition to organic production. These initiatives have included legislation, information and advisory services, and financial support in the form of grants or subsidies. Norway has provided a $1,000/acre one time payment for transitional farmers, and Slovenia has offered three years of cash assistance as its farmers convert to organic production

In contrast, there has been very little transitional support from governments in Canada and the United States, and no targets for organic production. In the United States, exceptions include initiatives such as the Horizon Organic Production Education (HOPE)

program, supported by Hillary Clinton, which encourages family farmers in the state of New York to convert to organic farming. In Maryland, transitioning farmers can access between $200 and $350 per acre from the Natural Conservation Service fund, and there are a variety of other incentives offered by state governments in Ohio, Maine, and Pennsylvania.

In Canada, there is hardly any support for farmers who are in transition, with the exception of Prince Edward Island, which reimburses current and transitional farmers for 75 per cent of the cost of certification. Given the uncertainties and risks that presently deter farmers from making the transition to organic farming, Saskatchewan must provide a significant incentive if we wish to achieve a goal of 10 per cent organic producers by 2015.

Recommendation: That farmers who convert to organic farming receive $10/acre to a maximum of $7,500 for each of the three transition years.

2.2 Mentorship in Organics

There's got to be somehow or other some workshops that get established so that young people who are interested in organics can go and ask questions because there are not very many people. It's hard to find information even within government circles about how to transition into organics. Speaking to people is something that needs to be done if there is going to be any education and encouragement for the organic sector to grow. If we didn't have neighbors within five miles who were already organic we would have had a terrible time trying to get into it- where do you go for seed? what do you do for machinery? can you do this? can you do that? who do you call for prices? (Gerald Dagenais, Marcelin)

Nearly every organic farmer can name another organic farmer that has provided much-needed advice and encouragement during the transition to organics. This mentorship support has usually come from a neighbour or someone in the local chapter of a certification body, or from a member of SOD. Mentorship is essential, so that transitioning farmers are able to consult with someone who has gone through the process.

The Saskatchewan Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment (2006) found that "the mentorship process has been fundamental in the assistance given to new and younger farmers transitioning to organic production." An impressive 89 per cent of organic farmers indicated that they had learned from other farmers.

Informational support was also critical. Eighty-two per cent had relied on books; 70 per cent on workshops; 62 per cent on conferences; 60 per cent on demonstrations; 34 per cent on websites; 24 per cent from the Prairie Organic Office, and only 22% from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) agrologists and the SAF Agriculture Knowledge Centre.

Although SAF publishes a fact sheet titled Transition to Organic Farming, and employs agriculture business personnel to assist organic farmers, there is a need for trained experts to provide advice and information to farmers as they transition and begin production. This is essential for a strong organic initiative in this province.

In the Province of Quebec, the Clubs Conseils En Agroenvironnment (CCAE) provides a model for such an initiative, which involves a network of agricultural facilitators that serve as catalysts for agricultural innovation around the province. Although this is a promising model, it would be unrealistic to propose a similar network of regional agronomists in Saskatchewan, simply because of the lack of trained Organic Specialists at the present time. I am therefore proposing an initiative that will blend mentorship and agronomics: an "Organic Mentorship Initiative", organized on a regional basis. It will build on the foundation of mentorship that already exists in the organic sector and simultaneously build capacity within SAF.

I recommend that an "Organic Mentor" be employed by each of the nine SAF offices: Prince Albert, North Battleford, Tisdale, Saskatoon, Yorkton, Regina, Outlook, Weyburn, Swift Current. Each mentor will be a past or present organic producer from the region. S/he will be hired on a half-time basis to provide advice and disseminate information to transitional and certified farmers - through farm visits, phone calls, e-mails and regional information meetings. This is a model that is familiar to all farmers; it builds on the "kitchen table" style of farm support that has been so effective and valuable for farmers in the past. It is similar to the Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) program, which "is based on demonstrated knowledge and work experience, not formal education." Like CCAs, organic mentors will be required to participate in continuing education programs and "uphold a code of ethics that puts the grower's best interests first and foremost."

These positions will be selected by a joint SOD/SAF panel and supervised through the Organic Agriculture Branch of SAF, proposed later in this report (section 4.3).

Recommendation: That SAF introduce an Organic Mentorship Initiative, with Organic Mentors employed on an outreach basis from the nine SAF regional offices.

3.0 CERTIFICATION

I never thought about it when we were farming with chemicals. It was just the way it was done. But once we talked about not using chemicals, there was no turning back. It was get rid of that, and get it out of our lives. We have learned so much over the last ten years. There would be no way we would ever go back...If organic farming went totally in the toilet, we would still be farming in the same way. Even if we weren't certified, we would never go back. I was all for it. It was a good move. (Carol Funk, Richard)

Currently in Canada, organic production is self-regulated through a network of independent certifying bodies, which provide written assurance that production systems conform to specified requirements. There are 30 certification bodies in Canada, with the following as the main certifiers in Saskatchewan:

- Organic Crop Improvement Association: (OCIA) – seven chapters in Saskatchewan
- Organic Crop Producers and Processors Inc. /Pro-Cert Canada (OC/PRO)
- Saskatchewan Organic Certification Association (SOCA) through Eco Cert
- Quality Assurance International / Quality Certification Bureau (QAI / QCB)
- Canadian Organic Certification Co-operative (COCC) now through QMI-Management System Registration

3.1 Certification and Environmental Stewardship

Every certified farm is subject to rigorous documentation and inspection to verify the integrity and quality of its organic production practices. This process is, in essence, an environmental audit. It determines adherence to environmental standards that have been defined for organic production and processing. For meeting this environmental standard of certification, the farmer must pay a fee, and these certification fees can range from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, depending on farm size. (The fees vary by certifier, but are believed to average $1,000 per farm.)

The cost of the certification fee may be a significant deterrent for some farmers who are considering a transition to organics, but it is also symbolic. It is ironic that organic farmers must pay a fee for having met the stringent environmental standards required for certification.

The reality of climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions have resulted in various initiatives that recognize and reward environmental goods and services. Carbon credits are being brokered, sold and traded stock-market-style. Cover

crop programs reward farmers for creating carbon sinks. The National Environmental Farm Planning Initiative and Canada-Saskatchewan Farm Stewardship Program (CSFSP) provide technical and financial assistance to farmers who develop environmental farm plans (EFPs) that "promote stewardship" and "mimimize and mitigate impacts and risks to the environment, by maintaining or improving soil, water, air and biodiversity."

This concept of rewarding producers for ecological goods and services (EG&S) for the benefit of society as a whole has become policy in both the United States and the European Union, and is being piloted in a number of provinces, including Saskatchewan. Organic producers are, of course, eligible for programs such as NEFP and CSFSP, but their certification standards are not recognized in the guidelines, even though organic certification recognizes unique and rigorous environmental standards and services. Research indicates higher soil, water and air quality in organic fields, lower nitrogen leaching as a result of using legume-based ploughdowns instead of synthetic applications, lower fossil-fuel use with extended rotations and greater biodiversity.

- Soil
  - higher organic matter content: higher stability and fertility
  - higher biological activity and more micro-organisms, which recycle nutrients more quickly
- Water
  - no risk of ground and surface water pollution from synthetic pesticides or herbicides
  - lower rates of nitrate leaching than in conventional systems
- Air
  - ecosystems that adjust more easily to climate change
  - reduced agricultural greenhouse gas emissions
  - higher carbon sequestration through more rapid nutrient cycles
- Energy
  - lower direct energy consumption (fuel and oil)
  - lower indirect fossil fuel use (fertilizers, pesticides)
- Biodiversity
  - more diverse and abundant flora and fauna
  - conservation and survival of pollinators
  - a more diverse landscape and habitat for beneficial insects, arthropods and birds

(El-Hage Scialabba and Hattam 2002)

The above referenced publication of the United Nations concludes as follows:
As a final assessment, it can be said that well managed organic agriculture leads to more favourable conditions at all environmental levels. Organic agriculture counteracts resource depletion (soil, water, energy, nutrients), contributes positively to the problems associated with climate change and desertification and can help to maintain biodiversity at a global scale. (pg. 62)

As indicated earlier in this report, the government of Prince Edward Island pays 75 per cent of its farmers' certification fees to a maximum of $500. The United States has introduced a similar incentive: 75 per cent of certification fees to a maximum of $750. I

am recommending that Saskatchewan demonstrate its leadership in organic agriculture by doing the same.

Such an action will be both symbolic and practical. It will demonstrate our support for organic farmers and the environmental services they provide. It will recognize their stewardship of the land for future citizens of this province. It will encourage conventional farmers to consider the economic possibilities of organic farming, and it will mitigate some of the risks incurred during transition.

Recommendation: That 75 per cent of the annual certification fees for each organic producer and processor be reimbursed by the Province of Saskatchewan, to a maximum of $750.

3.2 National Organic Certification Standard

Certification bodies are assessed and authorized by accreditation bodies approved by government. There are currently five approved accreditation bodies in Canada, three of which are based in this country: Standards Council of Canada (SCC), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Conseil des Appellations Agroalimentaires du Quebec (CAAQ), International Organic Accreditation Service (IOAS), and the Certified Organic Associations of British Columbia (COABC).

The absence of a cohesive national organic standard has been an issue for many years and has jeopardized export markets to the European Union. After years of negotiation and controversy, a national standard, or Canada Organic Regime (COR), is now being implemented. Most of the current certification bodies will continue to function under the new national standard.

This is an exciting and long-awaited milestone for organic production in this country and in Saskatchewan. When surveyed during the Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment, 84 per cent of organic farmers saw a national organic standard as either important (54%) or extremely important (30%). It will keep the door open to exports, especially to the EU, and consumers will soon see the "Canada Organic" label on certified products. This will undoubtedly accelerate the demand for organic and local produce. SAF has indicated its willingness to work with the federal government on implementing the Canada Organic Regime. It is therefore essential that we launch a campaign to support and promote the new national standard so that our own Saskatchewan organic producers and processors are in the spotlight.

Recommendation: That SAF, in consultation with SOD, prepare a communication strategy for implementation of the Canadian Organic Standard that will profile and promote Saskatchewan organic products.

4.0 ORGANIC PRODUCTION

When you first go into organics, the problem is that you have to change your concept of what production is and how it works and to me that was the hardest thing to do, to try and figure out..... "I am not going to spray with Roundup and I am not going to do this or that...How am I going to do this?"...We did a fair bit of research ourselves, a fair bit of stuff off of the internet, almost everything Brenda Frick wrote and we went through the whole SOD manual... I actually go back to stuff my Dad used to do when he was a kid and I draw on that a fair amount...(Ted Regier, Laird)

Organic farmers unfailingly talk about the importance of reliable and accessible information during the transitional period and in their early years of production. Many indicate they have to seek out multiple sources to piece together a plan for their farm: web sites, SAF fact sheets, workshops and conferences, the SOD Production Manual and, of course, other organic growers.

4.1 Saskatchewan Production Manual

One of the most valued resources for both transitional and certified producers has been the SOD Organic Production Manual (2000). It has served as a textbook for many organic farmers, especially as they convert their land over to organic production. The manual is now out-of-print and requires updating. There is also a recognized need for new sections (i.e. marketing, livestock) and color plates (i.e. weed identification).

Recommendation: That SAF support the SOD/OACC publication of a new Saskatchewan (or Prairie) Organic Production Manual to assist organic farmers with transition, production and marketing.

4.2 Web-based Support

SAF has recently added an organic agriculture link at its website making it one of only two provincial agriculture departments with a direct link to organics on the home page. (The other is New Brunswick.) This link connects with at least 15 fact sheets (i.e. *An introduction to beef production*) and the search engine will find other documents as well.

Other web-based information can be accessed at Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC), SOD, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) College of Agriculture and Bio-resources, and through the various certification bodies. There are numerous other sources – national and international.

A common request from organic producers is for as much "one stop shopping" as possible for transition and production purposes. I am recommending that SAF provide this service to organic producers, processors and consumers.

Recommendation: That SAF expand and maintain its webpage for organic agriculture to include links to OACC, SOD, provincial certification groups and directories of provincial processors, distributors, and farmers markets.

4.3 SAF Organic Agriculture Support

No provincial government in Canada provides a dedicated department or sub-department for organic agriculture. Instead, services are generally scattered throughout the relevant department of agriculture. This is the case for Saskatchewan, where we have only a .5 organic position in the Crop Development Branch. There is also one beef specialist whose work as a "niche" specialist includes organics.

Additional organic services are included in the work of individuals from each of the following SAF branches: Policy, Market Development and Food, Agri-Business Development and Crop Development. The advantage of this organizational service provision is that it integrates support for organic agriculture across the department. These SAF staff have begun meeting as an "Organic Agriculture Team" to address issues across the organic sector.

The disadvantages of the current organization are as follows:

- Staff may not have a background or expertise in organic agriculture.
- Their organic responsibilities may simply be "add-ons". The majority of their time and work is not focused on organic agriculture.
- Without dedicated positions, it is less likely to have "dedicated" proponents of the organic movement.
- With staff employed across the department and around the province, there may be some uncertainty around leadership, decision-making and follow-through on organic issues.

If Saskatchewan is to provide leadership in organic agriculture, government must play a significant role - as a clearinghouse for information, as a support network for transitional and certified farmers, and as a catalyst for policy. To meet the potential for a thriving organic sector in this province, SAF is clearly understaffed. British Columbia, for example, has three positions dedicated to organics, while we have one half-time position.

In September 2005, the Senior Management Group of the Crop Development Branch considered this issue in a document titled, "*SAF Support Options for Accelerating Growth in the Provincial Organic Industry*." One of the proposals was to "Increase Human Resources Dedicated to Organic at SAF" by creating a full-time specialist for each of the following areas: marketing, production and policy. My recommendation builds on this document, but also addresses the need for synergy and leadership.

I am recommending that an Organic Agriculture Branch be created within SAF, in addition to the six branches that currently exist in the Development Division. The head of this branch will provide leadership on all organic agriculture matters, with specific responsibility for certification and accreditation, intra-provincial communication, inter-provincial liaison, export markets and provincial policy development. S/he would also supervise the Organic Mentorship Initiative described earlier in this report, which will provide regional support for transitional and certified producers.

Under the supervision of this individual, I am recommending three specialist positions within the Organic Agriculture Branch, located strategically at regional centers:

- *Organic Crop Specialist*: Transition and production information and support for all crops, including fruits, vegetables and wild rice.

- *Organic Livestock Specialist*: Livestock production, processing and marketing.

- *Organic Marketing Specialist*: Branding and marketing of organic products for local and export markets, supervision of a "Saskatchewan Made" campaign for local and organic products (to be described later in this report).

I also recommend, later in this report, that Agri-Business staff at the regional centres be trained to facilitate the creation of processing and marketing co-operatives.

Recommendation: That an Organic Agriculture Branch be created within the Development Division of SAF, with its own head and three specialists: Organic Crop Production, Organic Livestock, Organic Processing and Marketing.

5.0 ORGANIC PROCESSING

To go to the Food Centre and develop new products is just a big giant step for a lot of these guys...We had this special blend pancake recipe from the guy we bought the stone grist mill from, and it was very popular, so we said, "Well, there's a product that we know is successful. Let's go with that!" So that was our first real blended product.
(Carol Funk, Richard)

I shopped for many years in health food stores including the Big Carrot in Toronto and probably when I was in a Whole Foods store about six months ago, I was totally shocked at how many products were available...and the thought just crossed my mind, these things are being manufactured somewhere, why couldn't we be doing this in Saskatchewan? (Yvonne Choquette, Toronto, originally Cudworth)

Presently, there are at least 90 organic processors in Saskatchewan, the majority of which are engaged in primary processing (cleaning and bagging) along with some secondary processing (flour milling). Nevertheless, we still import 85 to 90 per cent of our organic food (Morton 2005). For most organic products, the value is being added elsewhere. As is the case with conventional agriculture, organic farmers can be faced with marginal earnings on their commodities, with the profit occurring further up the value chain.

This lack of organic processing capacity is one of the barriers most consistently identified by organic producers. There are, in fact, producers who simply do not bother with certification because they can't get their product processed as organic in the province. This is widely acknowledged as a "gap" that needs to be addressed.

Examples:
- Consumers cannot purchase Saskatchewan-raised poultry unless it has been processed out-of-province. Chickens and turkeys are instead sold as "natural" or "hormone-free" or "free-range" or even "organically-grown."

- The market for organic milk is expanding faster than for any other organic product, but all of Saskatchewan's certified organic milk is imported. (Most of our conventionally-produced milk is also processed out-of-province.)

- There is no dedicated slaughter/processing facility for beef, bison or pork. There is the possibility of periodically running an organic line through existing facilities, but this is strictly regulated and requires a time-consuming and thorough conversion of the facility.

Neither industry nor government has given much attention to organic processing in the province but, given the current demand for organic products and the immaturity of organic processing in North America, Saskatchewan has an incredible leadership opportunity. We have a short window of time with only limited competition from

established processors and brands. This is the link in the organic value chain that is yet to be forged.

This is true for conventional agricultural products as well, but the need to segregate organic products makes local processing even more sensible. Because of the need to segregate raw organic products, transportation is more expensive. To avoid contamination, organic grain is often shipped in containers instead of in bulk, which increases transportation costs. Cost efficiency therefore lies in situating processors close to producers. As well, it is not necessary to locate processors near any particular distribution centre because organic products tend to be dispersed to a number of urban centres. This factor and the smaller scale of operation make rural locations more amenable to organic processing.

Some areas of market potential for organics include milled oats, breads and frozen dough products, vital wheat gluten, livestock and poultry, herbs and spices, dairy products, and vegetables (especially potatoes and frozen french fries). We grow more organic potatoes than Alberta or Manitoba, and could easily meet our own needs, but we still import from the U.S.

5.1 Organic Crops

There are success stories that can serve as models for expanding organic processing in the province:

- The Saskatchewan Food Centre, located on the U of S campus in Saskatoon, is a remarkable facility that enables clients to develop, process and package products in a controlled environment. The proportion of organic processing at the Food Centre is increasing. For small-scale and local distribution it serves a valuable purpose, but it only scratches the surface in terms of need.

- North-West Organic Mills in Maymont is a producer-owned facility for seed-cleaning and milling, which operates out of an old high school building. It is supported by 63 members and 100 investors. A limited variety of products are processed for local and export markets, such as whole wheat flour, pancake mix and wheat bran.

- Poplar Valley Organic Farms Ltd. near Zenon Park serves as a seed-cleaning plant as well as a facility for processing a number of products, such as flax seeds, split peas and rolled oats.

- Prairie Heritage Seeds/Galarneau Organic Farms is a family-owned farm and processing operation near Radville. The business is involved with seed cleaning, bagging and marketing of a variety of crops, with a main focus on kamut. The Galarneaus were founding members of the first organic certification chapter in the Province.

These examples illustrate three models for organic food processing in the province. The Food Centre is specifically designed to assist individuals and groups in preparing and packaging products and is publicly-funded. North-West Mills is a rural co-operative

through which organic farmers add value to their produce. Poplar Valley and Galarneau Farms are private, value-added enterprises operated by farm families.

It is essential to encourage all three models for organic processing, and this can be done by responding to their common need: HACCP approval. HACCP, or *Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point*, is an internationally recognized set of food safety principles. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is involved in the development, implementation and maintenance of HACCP through the Food Safety Enhancement Program (FSEP). HACCP is a food safety and security standard legislated and enforced by the CFIA.

In order to receive HACCP approval, processors must meet strict food safety standards, and the cost is often prohibitive for small or co-operative ventures. The 12-step plan involved in the implementation of HACCP can be costly. Some of these costs include: employee training time, system development and monitoring and the possibility that the facility under HACCP implementation may require upgrades. A small processor selling within the province is not required to have HACCP; however, some customers may require HACCP, and the CFIA may require HACCP for certain commodities if selling outside of Saskatchewan.

For a producer co-operative like North-West Organic Mills, the facility improvements for HACCP approval may cost anywhere from $50,000 to $150,000. This is inconsequential for large corporate food processors, but it is prohibitive for many community-based or producer-owned facilities. For Saskatchewan to expand organic production, we must level the playing field for local organic processing.

Recommendation: That the province reimburse the cost of meeting HACCP approval for new organic food-processing facilities that are rural, community-based and producer-owned.

5.2 Organic Livestock

The BSE crisis resulted in a $37.3 million Meat Processing Strategy (June 2005), which provided incentives for the development of meat-processing capacity in the province. At that time, there were over 20 projects at various stages of development, but with the border opening to the export of live cattle to the United States, most of these projects dropped away. At the same time, McCain Foods Limited decided not to build a new hog slaughtering plant in Saskatoon. In light of these circumstances and the unexpended funds that had been approved by the government, SAF is currently reviewing the Meat Processing Strategy.

At the same time, there are a few projects that are continuing to develop the capacity to build meat-processing capacity, such as the North East Slaughter Company (NESCO) plant in Melfort. NESCO's proposed plant will be producer-owned and regionally supported. Projects like NESCO are usually community-based, depending on a great degree of volunteer time and community support. Start-up financing is routine for large processors like McCains, but problematic for traditional or new generation co-ops. And of course, they risk competing with corporate giants like Cargill and IBP-Tyson that already dominate the meat industry.

As the province's meat strategy is reviewed and revised, it is essential that it respond to the demand for organic meat processing. To this effect, I recommend that an Organic Meat Processing Fund be implemented to provide assistance to community-based organic meat processors or regional meat processors that include an organic line in their operation.

Recommendation: That an Organic Meat Processing Fund be created to provide financial assistance to dedicated or integrated organic meat processing initiatives.

6.0 ORGANIC RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

There is no organic part of the College of Agriculture...I don't know what the government's role would be in, I don't know, establishing a chair or a college of organic studies or something like that.....but I do think that that would be part of it. A lot of it has to do with Brenda really, I think that she is doing some really good research and she seems to be able to get it out to us too. (Ted Regier, Laird)

6.1 Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC)

There are three interconnected organic agriculture research streams in the province. One is conducted through the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC), which was established in 2001 at the Nova Scotia Agriculture College in Truro. It plays a leading role in Canadian organic research and education. The OACC mission statement is to "conduct, coordinate, and disseminate producer-oriented research and education that will contribute to sustainable communities." OACC research provides organic farmers with practical information they can apply directly on their own farms. OACC also operates an exceptional website that includes current research, market information, virtual farm tours, upcoming events and links to other valuable organic sites on the internet.

Although the centre is located in Nova Scotia, an OACC Prairie Co-ordinator works out of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources at the University of Saskatchewan. She collaborates with farm organizations and certifying bodies in Saskatchewan to plan and provide university research projects through the College, and communicates research findings to farmers through workshops, meetings, articles and field days.

Funding for this position has been cobbled together in various ways from the University of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund, the Canadian Wheat Board, and agriculture departments in Saskatchewan and Alberta (and previously Manitoba). Given the unpredictable and tenuous nature of this funding, SAF's 2004 budget allocation ($250,000 over five years) was a step in the right direction. The next step is to fully-fund this OACC position and dedicate its work to organic research here in Saskatchewan.

Recommendation: That SAF fully fund an OACC position at the University of Saskatchewan by increasing its funding from $50,000/year over five years to a long-term agreement of $100,000/year over 10 years.

6.2 College of Agriculture and Bio-resources

The second stream of research includes organic research projects conducted or supervised by faculty in the College of Agriculture and Bio-resources. At present, there are no faculty dedicated to organic agriculture in the College, and this is a contentious issue with some organic producers. A few instructors integrate organic agriculture content into their

courses, but there is no requirement to do so, and there are no undergraduate courses in organic agriculture.

This has been identified as a gap by the Saskatchewan Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment (2006). The University of Guelph offers the only Organic Agriculture degree in Canada, and some provinces offer certificate programs. The U of S offers only one web-based course on "Weed Ecology", but this is part of a specialization from the Nova Scotia Agriculture College (NSAC).

The U of S College of Agriculture and Bio-resources has, however, supported a number of research projects on organic production and marketing issues and, as indicated above, has hosted the office of OACC Prairie Coordinator. Given the unprecedented growth of the organic industry and the economic, environmental and social sustainability of organic farming, the Dean has proposed the creation of a Research Chair in Organic Crop Production. This holds exciting possibilities for organic agriculture and the College is to be commended for this groundbreaking proposal.

An Organic Crop Production Research Chair will not only initiate and co-ordinate organic research projects, it will have a "multiplicative effect." It will trigger more research projects, graduate student work, longer-term projects, and funding. It will encourage the creation and introduction of organic agriculture courses in the College and the possibility of a specialization and degree in organic agriculture in the future. In collaboration with OACC faculty, it can be the genesis of an "OACC West" campus at the University of Saskatchewan.

An Organic Research Chair will serve as a signal of recognition and confidence in the organic sector, and raise the profile of both the University and the Province, nationally and internationally.

Recommendation: That the Province fund the creation of an Organic Crop Production Research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan.

Recommendation: That the College of Agriculture be encouraged to survey prospective, entrant and undergraduate students with the object of offering courses and, ultimately, a degree in Organic Agriculture.

For the College of Agriculture and Bio-resources to provide leadership in organic agriculture, it will require a dedicated organic research site. This need has been raised, not only by producers of cereal crops, but in my meetings with fruit and vegetable growers as well. At OACC, in Nova Scotia, this has been essential to maintain credibility with organic farmers and professionals, and for accommodating the unique nature of organic research:

Organic production and productivity cannot be masked with the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. A sustainable approach is required over years of management. Hence, site history has a large influence on the design and results of any research. This kind of research can be conducted on organic farms; however, rotations and management practices are much more difficult to control, and results can be very difficult

to explain because too many factors may be influencing a trial. Also, new products not yet approved for organic cannot be tested, and control plots (such as no weed control) are unappealing to the farmer.....

....Conducting research on dedicated organic land on a research station offers control and flexibility while establishing the long-term site history profile of organic production. It also allows research to be conducted at a centralized location making utilization of limited resources more efficient, and is much more conducive to collaboration with other (conventional) researchers who are beginning to show more interest in organics. It also allows trials conducted on farms to be replicated in a controlled environment where they can be more closely monitored. (Andy Hammermeister, OACC)

The OACC's Brookside research site at NSAC has included pest management trials (insects, weeds, diseases), rotation studies, variety trials, soil fertility/amendment trials and environmental research. Future plans include the establishment of a tile drain system to monitor management impacts on leaching. The site currently includes about six hectares of cultivated land, but this has proven too small to allow flexibility in management and to establish trials linked to rotations. Any research site must have relatively large areas of uniform and representative soils to permit effective research. It is also important that a future organic research site include dedicated equipment, particularly tillage implements and seeders. To avoid cross contamination of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, organic standards require thorough cleaning of conventional equipment before entering an organic site, and this can become very time consuming.

Recommendation: That a plot of land be purchased for the College of Agriculture and Bio-resources that can be the genesis of an exemplary centre of organic research - amenable to a broad range of organic research: cereal crops, fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, and livestock.

6.3. Saskatchewan Organic Commission (SOC)

The third stream of research includes projects initiated by organic producers through their organizations and associations. At the 2004 Organic Connections Conference in Saskatoon, an SOC Interim Board of Directors was elected to design a check-off commission for organic research projects. The commission would, in effect, redirect check-off funds from existing organizations such as the Saskatchewan Pulse Growers and dedicate these funds to organic research, with the following rationale:

Organic agriculture often takes a fundamentally different approach to agronomics, and the relationship between soil, plant and animal life, farmer and society is seen as intricately bound together. Organic research must follow an independent path.
(From letter to the editor of the Western Producer by Bob Willick, Chair, SOC Interim Board)

The proposed check-off would be applied at the first point of sale on commodities listed under Saskatchewan Agri-Food Council legislation: pulse crops, canola, alfalfa seed, flax, forage seed, canary seed, forage seed, winter cereals, oats and mustard. If successful, a check-off on cattle would then be requested, with a future goal of including

check-offs on wheat and barley, which are currently directed by federal legislation to the Western Grain Research Fund.

With the assistance of OACC and SOD, a ballot was conducted to determine the level of support among producers for an organic commission. Over 1,100 ballots were mailed to certified organic farmers in Saskatchewan and, of the respondents, 78 per cent voted for an independent organic commission. A proposal was then prepared for the Saskatchewan Agri-Food Council, which outlined the rationale, process and administration of a Saskatchewan Organic Commission. It was presented to the Agri-Food Council in November 2006, but the Council recommended against a dedicated organic commission.

A Saskatchewan Organic Commission would be the first check-off to be based on "method of production" as opposed to the current system of commodity-based research funding, which generally results in short-term, or seasonal, projects. Organic agriculture requires long-term research projects that take into account year-to-year crop rotation, as well as crop diversity. The goal is "to advance organic production research in balance with market developments in a way that will benefit both organic and conventional farmers."

SOC will be an organization controlled by Saskatchewan organic farmers for the benefit of organic farmers but we will always look for opportunities to co-operate on projects that will be beneficial to all farmers. (From letter to the editor of the Western Producer by Bob Willick, Chair, SOC Interim Board)

It is my recommendation that an Organic Commission eventually be approved for Saskatchewan. As described in the Interim Board's proposal, it will a) identify research needs and opportunities in the organic sector, b) collect and designate check-off funds for organic research projects, and c) disseminate all SOC research reports to the organic sector through articles, newsletters and websites.

Recommendation: That the Government approve the creation of a Saskatchewan Organic Commission to administer research funding on behalf of the industry.

6.4 Regional Colleges

As indicated in the 2006 Saskatchewan Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment, few "formal" education opportunities exist for organic farmers. When surveyed, organic farmers indicated a preference for small group (50%) and workshop (62%) settings, in locations that are regional (63.5%), rural (61%), in a local college (50.5%). About half (51%) of the producers would travel 50-100 kms for a course, and one-quarter (24%) would travel 200-500 kms. Similarly, about half (46%) would pay $50 to $100 for a course; one-quarter (23%) would pay $200 for a course. And, as one would expect, the higher the accommodation cost, the fewer producers are likely to register for a course.

Finally, the time and cost of being away from the farm is a major issue. One day away from the farm would be a concern for 22% of farmers and have a serious impact for 16% (total 38%). One week would be a concern for 24% and have a serious impact for 39% (total 73%). Replacement labour is difficult to find, and costly.

Given the results of this survey and the suggestions I have heard from organic farmers, there is a need for ongoing educational support, which should be delivered rurally - at regional colleges. I am also of the belief that these courses should be university accredited, with an Organic Agriculture Certificate awarded at the end of five courses (15 credit units). Accreditation was not the preference of farmers who participated in the Needs Assessment survey: 22% were interested in a certificate program, but 54% favoured noncredit courses. (Only 2.5% had an interest in a degree). However, it is my belief that accreditation will build capacity in the organic sector, providing meaningful credentials for those who wish take their turn as teachers or workshop leaders, work within SAF or serve in the Mentorship Program.

I propose a pilot project to be delivered at Carlton Trail Regional College in Humboldt. Carlton Trail participated in the Organic Sector Needs Assessment and has indicated its interest in piloting organic courses in the province. Humboldt has a central location in the province (within 500 kms of nearly every farmer) and a history of hosting organic meetings and conferences. The Prairie Ursuline Centre has been considered as a potential location for a dedicated organic learning centre.

Courses should be designed and delivered in response to the Training Needs Survey, with initial courses in Crop Production (to include horticulture and dairy), Marketing (to include marketing co-operatives, value chains and direct marketing), and Farm Management (to include strategic plans and certification processes). I suggest that courses run from January to March, with one week in the classroom each month followed by independent study at home. Home study can be designed to give on-farm application to the course content, with on-going telephone or e-mail contact with the instructor. For organic farmers, telephone is preferred over mail and 78 per cent of those surveyed have computers.

It is essential that such education initiatives be supported by government as we pursue our goal of supporting and encouraging organic farming in this province. Some funding may be procured from (Canadian Agriculture Skills Service (CASS), but I propose that organic growers be fully reimbursed for any unfunded tuition, accommodation and transportation costs.

Recommendation: That the Government facilitate the delivery of credit courses at Carlton Trail Regional College as a first step towards a Certificate in Organic Agriculture - with present or prospective organic farmers reimbursed for tuition, accommodation and travel costs.

6.5 K-12 Education

In a province with such a large agricultural sector, there is surprisingly little agricultural content in the K-12 school curricula, let alone information on organic agriculture. This has been identified by the Saskatchewan Organic Sector Training Needs Assessment and by the 2006 Organic Forum as an area that must be addressed. It is important that our students learn what the "organic" label means on the food they eat, the choices they can make as future consumers and the very nature of organic agriculture in Saskatchewan. With all of the field trips that students make in this province, the most obvious "fields" lie just a few minutes from their school. Visits to organic farms and processors would

contextualize curriculum content and give students a better appreciation of food and how it's grown.

Recommendation: That SOD be funded to develop units of study in organic food agriculture for implementation in secondary Agriculture and Consumer Education courses and in Elementary (K-5) and Middle Years (6-9) Health curricula.

In co-operation with industry players, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food offers an apprenticeship style, on-farm skill-training program called the Green Certificate Program. Through this program, trainees can acquire skills in several areas of livestock management, as well as irrigated crop production. Three levels of training are available in each area covering skills for technicians, production supervisors and managers/owners. This program provides a practical, hands-on training curriculum with the option of high school credits. The Green Certificate program can provide a template for an internship program in organic agriculture.

Recommendation: That organic agriculture be included as a component of the Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Green Certificate Program.

6.6 Prince Albert Conservation Learning Centre

The Saskatchewan Conservation Learning Centre (CLC), south of Prince Albert, is a highly utilized demonstration/research facility that informs and educates students on agricultural and environmental practices. It was established in 1993 through the Parkland Agriculture Research Initiative and Green Plan. In 1997, it was incorporated as a non-profit corporation with charitable status.

The CLC encompasses 480 acres in the Rural Municipality of Prince Albert. Through the involvement of many partners, the CLC showcases woodlots and shelterbelts displaying a wide variety of trees and shrubs for different purposes, medicinal herbs, dense nesting cover for waterfowl, riparian areas, as well as recent technological advances in crop production. The applied research activities at this site include environmental stewardship, as well as public and agricultural education programs. The Centre is open to the public and hosts a number of field days throughout the summer. It has a very active school program, which reaches up to 2,000 students each year. The focus is on conservation of soil and water and enhancement of wildlife habitat. Direct seeding and precision farming are two integral components of its operations, but there is no organic agriculture component.

Recommendation: That SAF provide funding for the development of organic field plots and curriculum materials for Prince Albert's Conservation Learning Centre.

6.7 Back to the Farm Research Foundation

The Back to the Farm Research Foundation was established in 1973. It expanded to include a demonstration farm when Elmer Laird, a pioneer organic farmer and environmental activist donated the use of his land and buildings in 2001. The 640 acre research and demonstration farm is located next to Highway #11 between Regina and Saskatoon, about three miles south of Davidson and conveniently close to the Eco-Centre at Craik. It was certified organic in 2002, the first Canadian research and demonstration farm to achieve that status. The Back to the Farm Research Foundation is an incorporated non-profit organization with charitable status, governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Elmer Laird continues to be actively involved in the foundation, and serves as its volunteer manager.

The Foundation maintains several research plots for the purpose of demonstrating that it is possible to farm without pesticides, choosing crops that are compatible and able to overcome any potential weed problems. Significant work has also been done researching and demonstrating benefits of intercropping. The Foundation offers, without charge, consultations and advice on all aspects of organic agriculture.

Recommendation: That we support the development of sustainable agriculture projects (organic field trials, demonstration plots, educational tours) by the Back to the Farm Research Foundation (Davidson).

7.0 MARKETING FOR EXPORT

I think there is going to be some sort of evolution that goes on in the marketplace with consumers. I am a prime example ...I grew up in a family that valued food a lot. My mom was a fantastic cook and we met every night at 6 p.m. for dinner and that was really nice ...And so I developed a sense of the culture of food. At the same time, I was caught up in pop culture so I ate a lot of fast food, too much fast food, and I got really sick and it took me about four or five years to realize it was the food. Then I started eating organic food and I got better. That's where I come from and that's where a lot of the marketplace is going towards. (Jason Freeman, Regina)

The world market for organic products is estimated to be $40 billion. This is the result of a spectacular increase in demand for organic products. In the United States, organic food sales have soared from $78 million in 1980 to $10.4 billion in 2003 and $13.8 billion in 2005.

In Canada, annual organic sales have risen from $615 million in 2001 to well over one billion dollars in 2006. Fruits and vegetables comprise 40% of total sales, followed by beverages (17%), bread and grains (14%) and packaged/prepared foods such as baby food, frozen food, jams and jellies (12%). The increase in demand for organics has been as high as 20 per cent a year, compared to growth rates of one to two per cent for total food sales. The Neilsen Company's 2007 Certified Organic Report indicates that more than half of Canadian households purchased organic products within the last year.

As indicated earlier in this report, this dramatic increase in consumer demand is due to a number of factors: food safety and security concerns; belief that organic food is healthier, tastier and more nutritious; increased awareness as a result of organic certification and regulation; a growing preference by consumers for products that are locally grown and processed. For all of these reasons, the demand for organics is expected to accelerate well into the future.

The best barometer for predicting the future of organics is the food industry itself. Organics have moved from health food stores to chains (Whole Foods, Wild Oats) to huge mainstream retailers (Loblaws, Costco, Amazon, Walmart, Safeway). Loblaws was the first to enter the organic market with its "President's Choice" line of products. With over 2,000 stores in Canada, Safeway has also launched an organic campaign that promotes its own organic brand on television, billboards, flyers and on hundreds of its trucks. The "O Organic" line has recently been expanded to baby foods and food for children ages six to 12, and a new product line has been introduced for teens and adults, called "Eating Right". There are reports that Safeway is seeing an increase in organic sales in excess of 100 per cent.

For both Loblaws and Safeway, organic produce has earned its own section in the store, but their branded lines are integrated with conventional products. Walmart intends to create organic "mini-stores" within its outlets, entirely stocked with organic products. And Costco intends to introduce bulk quantities of organic products selected for high volume sales.

It is expected that fast food chains will soon join the organic parade. There are already organic pizza outlets, including one in Saskatoon, and coffee shops are offering organic and fair trade coffees and teas.

As the corporate world rushes into organics, big players are swallowing up organic processors, wholesalers and retailers. Appendix B illustrates the corporate concentration that is already occurring in the organic sector.

This mainstreaming of organics is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it raises awareness of organics and stimulates demand; it makes organic food available to a broader range of customers. On the other hand, it has the potential to shift market power from organic farmers to the corporate sector, just as it has with conventional agriculture.

The question is this: will Saskatchewan farmers benefit from this incredible demand for organics, or will the benefits go elsewhere?

7.1 Marketing Co-operatives

So if we can envision ten years down the road we have, let's say, 25 certified organic farm groups spread across the prairies with perhaps 5,000 growers...And these marketing groups are communicating with each other on prices they are receiving from the marketplace or what they think they can get from the marketplace...These marketers get together once a month and share notes, so they can go back to their farmers and say, "Hey, this is what we need in the marketplace and these are the prices you should be expecting..." (Jason Freeman, Regina)

There is deep concern that the exponential growth in the sales of organic food will be accompanied by minimal growth in Saskatchewan's organic sector; that huge corporate retailers like Walmart will be supplied by huge corporate organic farms like Earthbound that depend on mass production and economies of scale.

There is concern that monoculture will displace biodiversity; that organics will succumb to an industrial model of farming that is not consistent with the values of economic, environmental and social sustainability that lie at the heart of the organic movement.

After all, Saskatchewan has a long history of growing quality food products for processing and marketing elsewhere. We are a long way from our markets in eastern Canada, the United States and overseas - a long way from the industrial centres that drive the business of food. Consequently, we have historically been viewed as a hinterland – as a supplier of raw materials – and our efforts to process food locally have often met

limited or short-lived success. Flour mills and meat-packing plants have come and gone; corporations have merged into monopolies, and we are more dependent than ever on boardroom decisions made elsewhere.

In the face of these realities, there are four opportunities for organic farmers and processors. As discussed in Chapter 5, the first lies in expanding the processing of organics in Saskatchewan. There is intense interest in value-added processing for the organic sector. There are about 100 processors in the province, most of whom market their organic products to the United States and Europe. We need to develop value chains with links that are solid and strong enough to protect our own organic farmers.

The second lies in "import substitution", which is the focus of the next chapter. Nearly all of the organic produce on our grocery store shelves is imported. We can and should substitute many of these products with our own Saskatchewan-made and Saskatchewan-grown products.

The third lies in ramping up our production and processing to capture our share of the world market in organics. At this time, the demand for organic products has outstripped the supply of organic produce. It is estimated that the U.S. imports $1.5 billion worth of organic products and exports only $150 million. This organic food trade gap presents an opportunity for Saskatchewan growers and processors.

The fourth lies in the creation of marketing co-operatives. Independent farmers and processors cannot provide the volumes required for mainstream retailers like Safeway or Superstore that require quantity and consistency of supply in order to keep shelves stocked in all of their stores. The only way farmers and processors can meet these economies of scale is to market collectively. Only a few marketing co-operatives exist in the province. One example is Farmer Direct, which is centred in Regina, and has 60 farm members. It markets with its own version of "fair trade", a global term that is used for products that provide a fair price for farmers and farm workers. Farmer Direct's literature brands its organic products as "fair deal", which includes "certification", "transparency" and "stewardship". Its "collective strength" lies in the "economic clout" that a co-operative can provide embodied in the following statement: "Harvest the power of our membership base."

Saskatchewan has a long successful tradition of co-operatives. They provide producers and consumers with selling and purchasing power that they can rarely have as individuals. With current trends in the organic marketplace, the co-operative tradition may be the only way for organic farmers to keep the market power that they deserve. It is essential that government encourage and support farmers and processors to form marketing co-operatives.

In Chapter 4, I recommended that an Organic Branch be created within Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food with one specialist in Processing and Marketing. Part of this specialist's responsibilities will be to facilitate the formation of marketing co-operatives.

I further recommend that a start-up fund be developed to assist farmers and processors in this process, and that a template for such co-operatives be developed by the Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development.

Recommendation: That the Department of Agriculture and Food facilitate the development of organic marketing co-operatives through a Processing and Marketing Specialist and the creation of an Organic Co-operatives Fund.

Recommendation: That the Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development develop a template for the creation of organic marketing co-operatives.

7.2 Organic Trade Fairs

Basically, if you want to get your product to the target market, you have to go to those shows. You have to be visible. You can't stay at home waiting for the phone to ring. You have to go. (Terry Helary, General Manager of Northern Lights Foods, LaRonge)

It is essential to set a place at the international table for Saskatchewan organic marketers.

BioFach is the world's largest organic trade fair - held in the German city of Nuremberg every second year. Imagine a 24,000 square foot hall, larger than our largest community halls, filled with booths, exhibits and samples of organic products from every corner of the world – grains, fruits, cheeses, desserts, oils, wines, cosmetics, clothes – all attractively displayed in national pavilions. There are 10 such halls at BioFach.

In the Canadian pavilion, the Saskatchewan presence is significant. From wild rice to wheat, from bison to kamut, Saskatchewan organic products are attractively displayed throughout the pavilion, under the banner of the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Commission (STEP). For four days, buyers and sellers meet and negotiate sales of Saskatchewan organic products primarily, but not exclusively, for European markets. BioFach is an important venue for the export of Saskatchewan organic products – not only for making sales but as a meeting ground for buyers and sellers. For many internationals, Europeans especially, contracts are not just about business; they are about developing and maintaining relationships.

STEP co-ordinates and manages Saskatchewan's presence at BioFach and its work is highly valued by the organic sector. With the accelerating demand for organic products, there is certainly a need to expand this role and to build a greater presence at trade fairs such as BioFach. On the other hand, there is a critical mass beyond which our presence

could become counterproductive – such as too many buyers or too much of the same product. An important part of the STEP presence is simply to put Saskatchewan on the map – to profile our organic products and draw attention for the benefit of all our organic exports.

STEP sponsors eight to 10 organic delegates to BioFach and smaller numbers to other trade fairs such as *Anuga* in Cologne, *Sial* in Paris, *ExpoWest* in Annaheim, and *All Things Organic* in Chicago. For BioFach, this sponsorship includes briefing and display materials, a travel and conference itinerary, and scheduled meetings with international trade commissioners. Delegates can only be sponsored for two years; after that, they are on their own. Sponsorship does not include travel and accommodation costs and booth fees, which total approximately $10,000 for a four-day fair like BioFach. For small enterprises - often farm-based, family enterprises - this can easily be prohibitive.

I believe that a modest level of funding support would make a significant difference for organic marketers. I also believe there is room for a stronger Saskatchewan presence at international trade fairs such as BioFach. The day might come when Saskatchewan will sponsor its own pavilion and thereby take a courageous step onto the world stage.

Recommendation: That an Organic Marketing Fund be provided to the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Commission (STEP) to sponsor up to 12 delegates to BioFach and other organic trade fairs, with sponsorship to include 50 per cent of accommodation, travel and display costs.

7.3 Nextrade Finance

Nextrade provides short term export financing for small and medium sized Saskatchewan exporters. It was created in 2004, with funding ($600,000 over three years) from the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA). As part of the agreement, our Department of Industry and Resources provided an initial capital pool of $1.2 million.

To be eligible for support under the program, exporters must be Saskatchewan-based and must hold a current order or commercial invoice for an out-of-province sale. The transaction must be for less than $USD 150,000. As long as there is a confirmed purchase order, Nextrade can provide a short term loan to the marketer at any stage of the transaction with negotiated credit term of no greater than 90 days. This enables small export companies to accept an export order and then to purchase, package and ship products without delays or extra cost. This is a valuable business tool for exporters.

It has become very clear that Nextrade is underfunded. The original capital pool of $1.2 million has been servicing average volumes of over $450,000 per month. Although the fund was originally designed to support small manufacturers, there has been a major uptake from the agricultural commodity sector, and most of this is from organic marketers. Total agricultural commodity and agri-value support exceeds $4 million a year, with nearly $3 million for organic shipments.

Nextrade financing is a fund that can be accessed easily by rural-based businesses that are sometimes underserved by traditional financial institutions. For organic farmers,

processors and marketers, it is a perfect fit. Most are small volume exporters with transactions that usually fall well under the $150,000 cap. With purchase order in hand, an organic marketer can obtain funding from Nextrade, make timely payments to farmers for their deliveries, transport the product to market, complete the sale, and then repay Nextrade, all within a 90 day window.

The following chart illustrates the distribution of Nextrade support for organics:

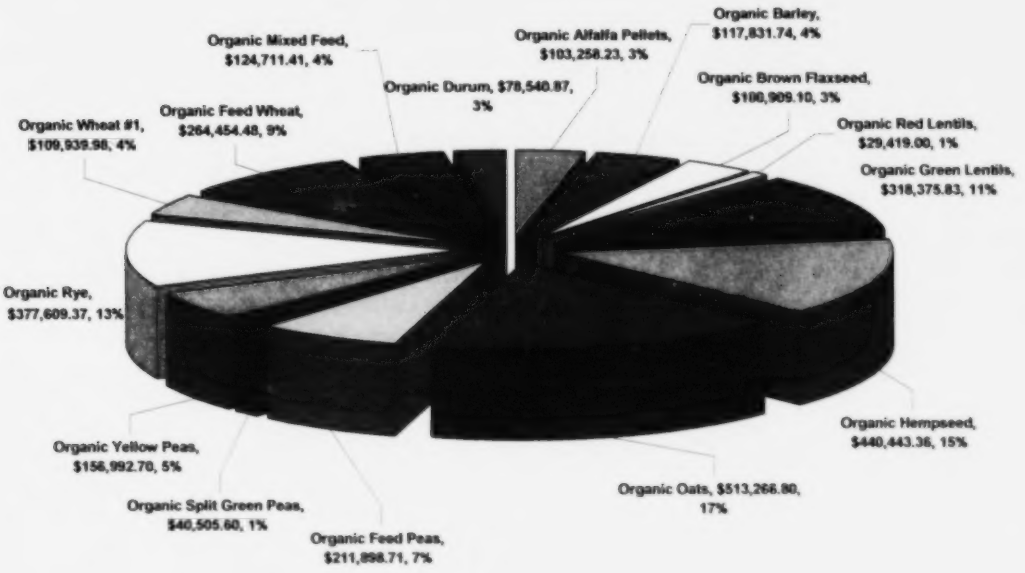
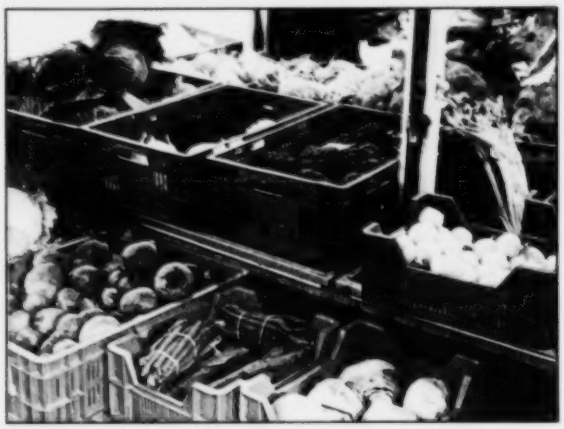

Organic Barley, $117,831.74, 4%
Organic Mixed Feed, $124,711.41, 4%
Organic Alfalfa Pellets, $103,258.23, 3%
Organic Durum, $78,540.87, 3%
Organic Brown Flaxseed, $100,909.10, 3%
Organic Feed Wheat, $264,454.48, 9%
Organic Wheat #1, $109,939.98, 4%
Organic Red Lentils, $29,419.00, 1%
Organic Green Lentils, $318,375.83, 11%
Organic Rye, $377,609.37, 13%
Organic Hempseed, $440,443.36, 15%
Organic Yellow Peas, $156,992.70, 5%
Organic Oats, $513,266.80, 17%
Organic Split Green Peas, $40,505.60, 1%
Organic Feed Peas, $211,898.71, 7%

Figure 2: Nextrade finance Supported Organic Shipments (since inception to October 2006)

The success of Nextrade has resulted in a cash flow shortage, with more demand than the capital pool can handle. There have been requests for an increase to the general fund or for the creation of a dedicated agricultural fund: "Nextrade Agriculture." With the valuable role it plays in the marketing of organic products and our commitment to expanding the organic sector in this province, the time is perfect for a dedicated organic fund: "Nextrade Organics." Given the current level of organic business ($3 million per year) through Nextrade, this would require a revolving fund of at least one million dollars.

Recommendation: That the government provide dedicated funding for a "Nextrade Organics" program to encourage and support the marketing of organic products by small and medium-sized Saskatchewan businesses.

8.0 MARKETING LOCALLY: REDUCING FOOD MILES



...We grow the best carrots in the world, just up in this country – the Codette area- and they have that beautiful soil...
(Norman Bromm, Tisdale)

...Imagine sitting down to a meal of curried chickpeas with a side of asparagus followed by sour cherry pie and chamomile tea for dessert. Most people in Saskatchewan would probably be surprised to find out that this meal can be provided by farmers right here at home. We need to promote the vast array of options that consumers have in terms of eating locally. It needs to be presented in an exciting perhaps, even exotic, manner. Perhaps a cook book featuring dishes from around the world that can be made with ingredients found right here at home. Or a chef tour at supermarkets promoting Saskatchewan made dishes. Or a" Saskatchewan features" section on restaurant menus. Or an advertising campaign using television, radio and newsprint to promote Saskatchewan food. (Shannon Urbaniak, Henribourg)

Saskatchewan produces herbs and spices such as feverfew, ginseng, chamomile, anise, coriander and fenugreek. This province produces some of the highest quality honey in the world. In 2003, Saskatchewan had $733,400 worth of sales in greenhouse vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and peppers. Last year (2006) there were 415 acres of vegetables (excluding potatoes) grown in Saskatchewan. Some of the vegetables produced included beets, pumpkins, cabbage and sweet corn, broccoli and asparagus. We can also grow apples, sour cherries, raspberries, saskatoons and strawberries. And we are the second largest producer of lentils in the world.

Saskatchewan has a long history of producing healthy, high quality food. Anyone who has grown up in rural Saskatchewan carries a nostalgia about the taste and wholesomeness of homegrown food: garden vegetables, whole milk stored in quart sealers, fresh cream and homemade butter, eggs scooped from under watchful hens, saskatoons and chokecherries, fryers from laying hens or the nearest hatchery, pork and beef from the local herd and processed locally. It was all a matter of necessity and self-sufficiency – true "sustainability." But the food tasted better and was, arguably, healthier and more nutritious than much of what we eat now.

We grew food, not only for ourselves, but for the rest of the world. Even our school textbooks proclaimed this province "the breadbasket of the world." Our provincial logo was, and still is, a sheaf of wheat. But, for better and worse, much has changed: from wheat to canola to biofuel; from horse to tractor to class nine combines; from green revolution to aerial spraying; from summerfallow to precision farming and zero tillage; from crow rate to escalating freight rates; from "free trade" to trade injury and the World

Trade Organization (WTO); from seed-saving to Plant Breeders' Rights and terminator seeds; from homesteads to multi-section farms; from towns to villages to hamlets.

With increased production and farm size, we have become an "export economy", but we are an "import economy" as well. It is estimated that food travels an average of 2,500 kilometres before it reaches our plates (Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market – cited in World Watch Paper #163). We export 80 to 90 per cent of the food we grow...but we import 85 to 90 per cent of the food we eat, and there is something fundamentally wrong with that picture. For a province of 43 million acres, with 45 per cent of the arable land in this country, we certainly have an opportunity to expand the range of food that we grow and export, but we have an even greater opportunity to grow more of our own food and process it here...in Saskatchewan. We used to do that and there are two converging forces that will require us to do it again: "climate change" and "peak oil."

Earlier in this report, I have discussed the role that organic agriculture can play in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change. Ironically, just as we are beginning to mitigate and manage the effects of fossil fuel use, those same fossil fuels are being depleted.

Most experts suggest that if we haven't reached "peak oil" already, we soon will. The most optimistic forecasts suggest 2025 as the point at which we will begin the downslide, but many suggest that world peak oil production will have occurred somewhere between 2000 and 2008. It is difficult to pin down an exact time because most oil companies, for marketing reasons, tend not to disclose the level of reserves. We can assume, however, that peak oil is inevitable and we are not yet prepared for the consequences. Oil is, after all, finite and non-renewable.

From draft horse to four-wheel drive, most of the changes in agriculture have been fueled by easy access to cheap oil and gas. We have enjoyed *"an unprecedented orgy of nonrenewable condensed solar energy accumulated over eons of prehistory"* (Kunstler Pg 7, 2005). However, just as the abundance of fossil fuels has transformed agriculture, its depletion will also transform agriculture:

The cost of transport will no longer be negligible in a post-cheap-oil age. Many of our agricultural products will have to be produced closer to home, and probably by more intensive hand labor as oil and natural gas supplies become increasingly unstable...All of our accustomed modes of activity are going to have to change in the direction of smaller, fewer, and better. (Kunstler, pg. 7, 2005)

Even skeptics who question the imminence of peak oil and optimists who believe that a technological solution will soon be found can not deny the common sense of producing more of our own food locally. Ninety-three per cent of our vegetables are imported, some of which we could easily provide for ourselves. We grow enough potatoes to be self-sufficient and could easily do the same with other vegetables as well. With greenhouse and processing facilities, we could reduce the food miles for everything from carrots to cold cuts.

This kind of "import substitution" requires a concerted campaign to re-connect consumers with local producers, and this is what more and more consumers want. According to a November 2006 Ipsos-Reid poll, when consumers give their food priorities, they list them in the following order of priority: "*local organic*", then "*local*", then "organic". In the same poll, respondents were asked what they considered the top benefit of buying locally grown and fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. The top three responses, regardless of gender, age and education were: 1) helps the local economy, 2) supports local farmers, 3) tastes better.

Results were the same for organic products. When asked "*How much have you read, heard or seen about the following types of food?*" women indicated more knowledge of both locally grown and organic food, as did older, more educated and higher income respondents. Surprisingly, residents in Saskatchewan and Manitoba scored lowest in Canada. It's clear from the poll that we need to build awareness of both locally grown and organic food in our province.

A centrepiece of this report is therefore a campaign to raise awareness, capacity, and demand for locally grown food, knowing this can simultaneously promote organic agriculture in Saskatchewan. It will also differentiate Saskatchewan organic products from the imported organic products that presently dominate grocery store shelves. Ninety per cent of our organic food is imported, and huge retailers like Wal-Mart are quickly entering the picture. With a Saskatchewan brand, consumers will be able to clearly and easily choose food that is labeled "Canadian Organic" and "Saskatchewan Made." There are various models and proposals that can be adapted and extended for a "Saskatchewan Made" campaign.

8.1 Food Procurement Policy

The key is in keeping it small, keep it local, more value added, sell it here to the people who live here, support our own economy, support our own people (Kalissa Regier, Laird)

For organic growers and customers, the nutritional advantage of organic foods is unquestionable, and there are studies that validate this claim. Consumers are clear about their beliefs. High on the Ipsos-Reid poll of the reasons consumers give for choosing local and organic food is because it's "healthier." Similarly, in a 2003 AC Neilson survey, 32 per cent of respondents believe organic foods are healthier; 18 per cent think they contain no pesticides, and 11 per cent cite better quality. Whether it's for health reasons or to support the local economy, or both, we need to rethink our food policies. Consumers have spoken. In the United Kingdom (UK), sales of organic food soared by 30 per cent as a result of concerns over contaminated food and obesity. One of the interviewees for this report was unequivocal in his views on food and health:

We have to come to a point of time where we devise mechanisms so the marketplace works for farmers...We are in this kind of weird reality where we have a cheap food policy...like cheap in all senses of the word. We have cheap crappy food. Consequently, people are getting sick. We've got obesity, heart disease, cancer...Food is one variable of that. I realize it is only one variable, but not to come to the conclusion that food is a very significant variable, you have to have your head stuck in the sand.

Whether we agree with this sentiment or not, we cannot deny the common sense of procuring as much food as we can from our own farmers. In Ontario, institutions like the University of Toronto have implemented a "Local Flavour Plus" program. This is a food procurement policy that favours locally grown products. Elmer Laird and the Back to the Farm Research Foundation have advocated a similar program for organic food in Saskatchewan: *Our research foundation has been recommending that you start serving organic food in the four restaurants operated by the provincial government in Regina, our hospitals, our nursing homes, school lunch programs, food banks, pregnant women, new mothers and university students.* [June 19, 2006]

Recommendation: That the Government design and implement a local procurement campaign for locally grown and organic food in public institutions, beginning with school lunch programs, hospitals and the legislative cafeteria.

8.2 Farmers Markets and Community Assisted Agriculture

More and more consumers not only want to know where their food comes from, but **who** produces it. A few grocers recognize this and post signs, brochures or business cards from the local farms of origin. Some grocers even post photographs. However, nothing beats a human connection, especially here in our province. As Leanne Labrash of Saskatoon said to me: "*Saskatchewan is still a face-to-face place.*"

Farmers markets give farmers and consumers an opportunity to meet face-to-face. There are numerous farmers markets in rural and urban Saskatchewan. Some are seasonal; a few operate year-round; most open on a weekly basis. The Saskatchewan Farmers Market Co-operative (SFMC) is an umbrella association for many of the province's farmers markets. It is a not-for-profit co-operative, started in the early 1970s and legally registered in 1979. There are many other farmers markets in the province that are not members of the SFMC.

The farmers market is an important meeting place for organic producers and their customers. Although the vast majority of consumers opt for "one-stop" grocery shopping, more and more people are making a regular stop at the local farmers market. Farmers markets therefore have great potential for localizing our food economy and reducing food miles. A "Saskatchewan Made" or "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign must include the promotion of farmers markets.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a partnership between the farmer and consumer, in which the consumer purchases a "share" in the farming operation in return for produce. After making payment in cash or in kind, the consumer receives weekly or biweekly baskets of farm produce, usually whatever is in season. The farmer earns a steady customer; the consumer enjoys a reliable delivery of farm-fresh food, and both contribute to the local economy.

Recommendation: That a "Saskatchewan Made" or "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign include the promotion of farmers markets and community assisted agriculture.

8.3 Web-Based Resources

The internet can be an excellent tool for both buyers and sellers of locally produced food. Manitoba's Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives has a webpage which includes a "Manitoba Shopping List" and a "Manitoba Meat Buyer's Guide", which enables consumers to source locally grown products. At the University of Regina, LOFO ("Local Food") has launched a "a free online farmer's market" for those wishing to buy or sell locally produced food. South of the border, the State of Iowa is launching a website this year (2007), with the potential of being one of the most sophisticated methods of sourcing information on local food. Described as an "interactive, online mapping system designed to link food producers, distributors, buyers and sellers", project leaders hope the project will spread nationally. Buyers and sellers can access information ranging from federally inspected meat plants to the names of producers of farm fresh eggs, all with the sophistication of global imaging satellite data.

Recommendation: That SAF develop the capacity to create an interactive website that connects producers and consumers of "Saskatchewan Grown" foods.

8.4 Awareness and Promotion of Saskatchewan Organic Food

■ Ontario conducts a "Foodland Ontario" campaign to support Ontario producers. It consists of billboards, television ads, and slogans such as "*Good things grow in Ontario*", "*Ontario....there's no taste like home.*" A comparable campaign for Saskatchewan could include slogans such as:

"*Sask grown: a taste of home*"
"*Food as diverse as the land and people*"
"*Saskatchewan: we've got more than bread in our basket*"
"*Saskatchewan: you should taste us now*"
"*Flavor longer than the sunsets*"
"*A prairie potluck of taste*"
"*Saskatchewan: a flavor for every town*"

■ In British Columbia, Alisa Smith and James MacKinnon have written a book which chronicles their one year project to eat only food grown locally, titled *The One Hundred Mile Diet*. At the 2006 Organic Connections Conference and in articles and media interviews, journalist Amy Jo Ehman has described her year-long project to seek out, prepare and celebrate Saskatchewan-grown food. A "Saskatchewan Made" or "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign could encourage, or even challenge, consumers (as in the "one tonne challenge") to choose local and organic food whenever they have a choice.

■ We already have two "Saskatchewan Made" stores, in Regina and Saskatoon, that market locally grown and organic products. We also have a network of independent grocers and community-based co-ops that are perfect venues for marketing local and organic produce. Local products are rarely identified in Saskatchewan's grocery stores. In other parts of Canada, local and organic products are accompanied not only by labels and signs, but even by a map or photograph indicating the farm of origin. With

encouragement from both consumers and government, local grocers and co-ops could participate in a "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign.

Building on these and other initiatives, I recommend a comprehensive "Saskatchewan Made" or "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign to profile and promote locally grown and organic products. There is a powerful sense of community in this province. I believe that if we give people the knowledge and opportunity they need to buy local, they will respond. If there was ever a time to call on this sense of Saskatchewan spirit, it is now.

Recommendation: That the Government launch a multi-year "Saskatchewan Made" and "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign, to include radio, newspaper, television and billboard ads, in-store labeling and slogans that promote Saskatchewan-grown and organic foods.

9.0 ORGANIC FARMING AND RURAL REVITALIZATION

It is unbelievable to me that futurists and experts at universities and in government don't see how important it is to all of us that a stable body of people remain in intimate touch with the land, and include it in their equations about the future. So far there has been no concerted effort that I know of by governments at any level to address the issue of rural depopulation in a creative way. (from "Home" by Sharon Butala)

We believe that sustainability will become the dominant issue of the 21st century. Our society needs to develop ways of living that are economically viable and socially just, which do not at the same time destroy the ecological base that sustains us and all other life on the planet. The Town and Rural Municipality of Craik therefore propose to embark on a joint long-term project in search of ways of living that address the issue of sustainability and rural revitalization through physical demonstrations of viable solutions. (Vision Statement, Craik, Saskatchewan)

They kind of look at you like a sentimentalist, but you know what, the thinking is going back. Some of those people in the cities are looking for an opportunity to homestead. I know it sounds like a romantic notion, but there is a certain satisfaction in doing something yourself, growing it yourself. (Carol Funk, Richard)

At the turn of the 20th century, Sir Wilfred Laurier's government launched a major settlement initiative, led by Interior Minister Clifford Sifton. Waves of immigrants crossed the Atlantic and a poster campaign in the United States lured settlers north. The rest, as they say, is history. The story of many Saskatchewan families is rooted in the homesteads that were settled during those years.

There were about 55,000 farms here in 1906, one year after our province was created. This number nearly doubled over the next 10 years and then rose dramatically to 142,000 by 1936. Since then, farm numbers have steadily dropped, and the size of farms has increased in response to global competition. By 1996 the number of farms was 57,000, about the same as it was in 1906. The latest Statistics Canada census (2006)

indicates a 12.4 per cent drop in the last five years. There are now about 44,000 farms in Saskatchewan.

Farming throughout the past century has been a story of prosperity and depression, reciprocity and protectionism, co-ops and corporate monopolies, mechanization and chemicalization, collective marketing and open markets; rail abandonment and short lines, free trade and trade injury, rain and drought. The common thread is this: a struggle by farmers to grow good crops and receive a fair return after their bills are paid. Unfortunately, this has often been an elusive goal. Farmers have rarely had the market power they deserve. Instead, world markets, aided and abetted by federal farm policies, have inflicted a cost-price squeeze that has forced economies of scale and rural depopulation.

We all know the impact this has had on the rural fabric of this province: larger farms, smaller communities, fewer services. It also resulted in the closure of rural hospitals, service centers and schools, as well as an unrelenting population shift from rural to urban. In 1936, our farm population was 574,000, or 62 per cent of our total population. By 2006, it was only 59,185, or 17 per cent of our population.

This change has been accompanied by a sense of inevitability - a hegemony of thought that dismisses rural repopulation as a "sentimental" or "nostalgic" idea. Most of the time, our attention and debate is given to how we should adapt to "economic realities." However, we would do well to remember that through creative public policy, government has the power to create and implement policies that meet not only economic and environmental goals, but social goals as well.

We cannot restore the rural fabric we once had, but we need not accept the inevitability of current trends. If our desire as a people is to revitalize our rural communities (and I think it is) then the choice is already made. With this as an end, we only need means. Organic agriculture provides one such means.

There are numerous models for rural repopulation and revitalization elsewhere in the world and some are specifically organic. In the State of Iowa, Woodbury County has offered property tax rebates to farmers transitioning to organics, and has passed a law requiring the county's food service contractor to, whenever possible, purchase organic food grown and processed within a 100 mile radius of the county courthouse. These initiatives are part of an effort to revitalize the rural communities after a drop in farm population from 1,700 to 1,200 in just one generation.

As in Saskatchewan, most of Iowa's produce is exported, most of its food is imported, and the rural areas have depopulated as a result of "economies of scale." The county is relying on Iowa's greatest resource, its "world-class soil", to build a sustainable future. The hope is that organic farms, which are smaller and more labor intensive, will "bring in new jobs, deepen the tax base and repopulate Woodbury's countryside."

Here in Saskatchewan, the community of Craik has broken the ground for integrating economic, environmental and social sustainability. An "eco-village" has been created that

showcases sustainable technology. The interpretive centre has been built from straw-bale construction and incorporates many green technologies: energy efficiency, sustainable construction, and ecological water and waste handling. To encourage "settlement", 127 acres of land has been set aside for individuals and families *"to come and build an energy efficient house and a business plan of how they can make a substantial portion of their income on five to 20 acres of land."* As their website states: *"Craik opens the door for future eco-communities across Canada."*

For many who would wish to engage in market gardening or small-scale organic farming, the availability of land is a huge financial and logistical obstacle. If we were to follow the two examples given above, this could be addressed by offering various incentives along with conditions for land allotments. New organic producers might be expected to develop a market garden or small scale farming operation that meets the basic standards for organic production. Enhanced incentives might be provided to those who add to the environmental sustainability of the farm by building an energy-efficient home, or installing a renewable energy technology for transportation, electrical generation, or the heating and cooling of buildings.

If communities and municipalities were to design incentive programs that invite new organic producers to grow more of our own food, we could potentially provide locally-grown organic food for many of the 22 urban centres of this province.

The Prince Albert area, as an example, has great potential for piloting such an initiative: arable land and mixed forest, with an urban centre close by. Some of the land is marginal, in terms of crop-based agriculture, but there is good potential for gardening, market gardening or livestock. There is also leadership and mentorship available in renewable energy, log and straw building, and organic farming. There are numerous communities within easy commuting distance of Prince Albert, many of them seeking people to repopulate their rural areas, and thus allow them to keep their local schools and services. An opportunity exists to grow local food for an urban market, while at the same time revitalizing already existing rural communities.

Organic farms and market gardens will contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing food miles and thereby reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. They will contribute to economic sustainability by revitalizing local economies. And they will contribute to social sustainability by repopulating some of our rural communities. The more we grow our own food, the more people we will have on the land.

Recommendation: That the provincial government in consultation with municipalities and First Nations, develop incentives to attract new organic farmers and market gardeners, thereby contributing to local food production and rural revitalization.

9.1 Inviting New Organic Farmers

To expand organic agriculture in Saskatchewan, I believe we need to invite the participation of three populations in particular: First Nations, New Citizens and Youth.

First Nations

The First Nations Agriculture Council of Saskatchewan (FNACS) was established in 2002 with its mission to "develop a strong, viable and sustainable agriculture sector both on and off reserve for status Indians in the Province of Saskatchewan." FNACS has received a SAF grant to develop, co-ordinate and implement an agricultural strategy for First Nations youth. There are three education initiatives, including a "Youth Livestock Program", all designed to involve First Nations youth in agriculture.

The prevalence of grassland on many First Nations has resulted in a number of cattle and bison operations in the province. Most of these herds are on rangeland that has never had chemical applications. Some First Nations people have recognized this economic advantage, but the possibilities for organic conversion are largely unexplored. There is therefore great potential for certified organic crop and livestock operations on First Nations' land.

The first step is to form relationships. It is essential that conversations begin that will invite First Nations participation in the organic movement. I am therefore recommending that a First Nations Organic Agriculture Committee be formed with representation from FNACS, SOD and SAF. This committee will orient existing First Nations agricultural enterprises to the process of organic certification, production, processing and marketing. It will connect First Nations ranchers and farmers with organic livestock associations like SOL and COLA, and with the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate. It will assist FNAC to explore the exciting future that organic crops and livestock might provide for First Nations youth.

Recommendation: That a First Nations Organic Agriculture Committee be formed with representation from FNACS, SOD and SAF to explore the economic possibilities for organic agriculture on First Nations land.

New Citizens

Perhaps we need an immigration and settlement policy like the one that settled the west a century ago. One that would bring in people with farm backgrounds from poorer countries. People with a love of the land looking for a better life. If Saskatchewan had two million people, our agriculture sector would be more diversified and prosperous. A policy like this could see the transfer of those million acres from the 70-plus farmers to a new generation. Is it so hard to imagine? (Paul Beingessner, Feb. 2, 2005)

Saskatchewan has launched a bold strategy to attract immigrants to live, work and raise their families here. The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) allows the province to nominate applicants to the federal government for landed immigrant status. As an alternate and quicker means of entry to Canada, it has been highly successful. Thanks to this program, a record number of 1,255 nominations were issued this past year. With the inclusion of spouses and children, this represents 3,800 potential newcomers en route to our province, well ahead of the target of welcoming 5,000 newcomers annually by 2008.

One of the seven categories for nomination is "farmers." This is an area of great potential. The future of farming in this province may very well be transformed by a new wave of immigrants, but this time only a few will come from Europe. Most will come from developing countries. And they will bring with them a knowledge and an approach to farming that will be very different from ours. The question is this: can we invite, include and learn from the agricultural practices of these new citizens even if they are very different from ours? If so, the landscape of this province might once again be transformed over the course of this century.

Smallholdings for the purpose of gardening, market gardening or small-scale farming will provide a familiar new home for many new citizens. It is essential that we invite this possibility – that we open the door to new citizens that wish to settle and farm and perhaps transform our culture of agriculture.

Recommendation: That the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program identify and invite new citizens who wish to farm organically in our province.

Youth

It had a lot to do with me moving back here and having an interest in alternative agriculture, not necessarily organic...But I grew my first hemp crop that year and it was a really good crop for me, and my parents saw how that went...I did really well that first year and it sort of opened up their eyes, too. (Kalissa Regier, Laird)

There is a growing number of people in the city that see the farm as something admirable if you can do it kind of cutting edge. I think there could be a whole population of new pioneers from the city who see a model and say, "Hey, we can do that! It's a model that actually works!" There is a possibility that kids from conventional farms may realize that this is another model for them too. (Shane Hunter, Birch Hills)

For those who grow up on the farm, on the reserve, or in rural communities, there is a culture of thinking that opportunities exist somewhere else – that you have to leave home to find both training and employment. When students attend career days or career fairs, they learn about potential careers in social work, health care, education, armed forces, forestry, the RCMP, and more. In their classrooms, they have visits and presentations from representatives of many of these professions and may even be actively recruited. Aside from a few Agriculture 30 courses, students are rarely, if ever, oriented to potential careers in farming.

This is especially troubling, given the latest Statistics Canada census. It indicates a dramatic decline in the number of farm operators in Canada under the age of 35: from 78,000 (1991) to less than 30,000 (2006). This drop is even more precipitous in Saskatchewan over the same period of time: from 15,635 to 5,905. Not surprisingly, the average age of Saskatchewan farmers has continued to increase and is now 53 years.

Organic agriculture has the potential to draw young people to farming, but they must first be made aware of its possibilities. It is important to have young organic farmers, women and men, serve as role models for young people – to tell their stories in classrooms and at career days so that organic farming reaches the radar of young people, especially in rural areas.

For young adults who are interested in a career in organic agriculture, it is also essential that an orientation be provided that acquaints them with the opportunities and challenges of organic farming. It should be experiential, with an opportunity for hands-on learning from practitioners, and it should include analysis and reflection. An internship model is most appropriate and there are various models for this:

■ Ontario offers FarmStart, a new initiative with a mission to "facilitate, support and encourage a new generation of farmers to develop economically viable, locally based and

ecologically agricultural enterprises." FarmStart has recently introduced an "Incubator Farms Program", a three to five year program to assist young and new farmers in starting agricultural enterprises. It will "include access to land, infrastructure and equipment, together with business planning, marketing and production support." Participants are expected to adhere to organic principles and regulations.

■ The Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) offers a full-season farming internship on southern Ontario organic farms. Interns gain on-farm experience and mentorship support for most or all of a growing season. The program includes workshops, seminars, special projects and field trips by all participants to selected CRAFT organic farms. One of these farms, Everdale, runs its own "Future Farmers Internship" program- "a practical and educational program designed to provide a base for a career in organic farming." Everdale has graduated more than 30 interns since 2000, most of whom are now farming

■ The New Brunswick Farm Apprenticeship Program is similar to CRAFT. It is a six-month mentorship program at the Falls Brook Center. It includes a "Farming Organically Workshop Series" with guest speakers and hands-on activities, reading and journaling assignments, optional mid-season farm exchanges and on-farm research projects designed by farmers and supported by the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada (OACC). Students receive a community college course credit upon successful completion. New Brunswick's Department of Agriculture and Aquaculture is actively involved in this program.

■ The National Farmers Union (NFU) Youth have developed a web-based "Land Registry and Farm Exchange" to help young farmers get started. It lists land and farm buildings that older or semi-retired farmers are willing to rent or lease to a beginning farmer. The registry is designed to be a meeting place for young and old: "The experience and insight of an older farmer combined with the energy and ambition of a new farmer is mutually beneficial...There is a great opportunity, not only to help the next generation of family farmers get a start, but also to keep your unused land and idle buildings maintained."

■ In California's Salinas Valley, students in the Programa Educativo para Paquenos Agricultores (PEPA) or Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association's Small Farm Education Program spend six months learning about organic farming, after which they are offered land for farming at reduced rent of $200 an acre (from $1,000 to $2,000). Once the graduates have established themselves on the land, the rates are allowed to increase. Water and equipment are also subsidized the first year, but are full price thereafter. Since 1985, 600 families have participated in this program, most of them Spanish farm workers.

Recommendation: That SAF and SOD collaborate to create a Saskatchewan Farm Start summer internship program for young people of all cultures who wish to pursue a future in organic farming.

10.0 CONCLUSION

"There is going to be a shift, a massive shift. There is going to be a critical mass....I don't know when it's coming but it will be...and it's either going to happen when 10% of the consumers go organic or 10% of the producers go organic. If we resist it, we'll just end up wasting resources. If we embrace it, it could be a wonderful thing." (Jason Freeman, Regina)

In the fall of 2007, as this report is released, the economy of Saskatchewan is booming. In-migration has surpassed out-migration, and the population has just passed the one million mark. All economic sectors are on an upswing, including agriculture - where rising grain prices and the development of a biofuels industry are improving farmers' margins and generating excitement for the future. This is a good time for agriculture in this province.

With some long-awaited stability and optimism in farm country, the stage is set for new opportunities in organic farming. The demand is there. Sales of local and organic food continue to rise, and retailers are placing more and more organic products on their shelves.

This report makes recommendations that build on our present prosperity to expand organic agriculture in this province. It brings together thoughts and perspectives from Saskatchewan's organic community - from interviews, studies, surveys, meetings and conversations. The work has been inspiring, challenging and energizing.

When organic farmers articulate their vision of the organic movement, they weave together three strands of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. This report is an attempt to weave these strands together. It responds to the need for economic sustainability, so that our own producers benefit from the increasing demand for organic food. It responds to the need for environmental sustainability, so that we can leave water, soil, air and climate conditions as a legacy for future generations. It responds to the need for social sustainability, so that we can define and determine the kind of rural fabric we desire in this province.

Ultimately, the setting and fulfilling of this vision is a collective responsibility of the organic sector and government. Therefore, borrowing from a proposal of the SAF Organic Team, I recommend that a formal process be developed to review the recommendations of this report and provide ongoing advice and direction to the Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Recommendation: That the Minister of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food appoint an Organic Advisory Board to provide ongoing advice and direction for the development of organic agriculture in Saskatchewan.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

■ *Recommendation: That the Saskatchewan Organic Directorate (SOD) receive core funding of $200,000/year to administer its work of serving organic producers and processors in Saskatchewan.*

■ *Recommendation: That Saskatchewan set a goal of having 10 per cent of Saskatchewan farmers in organic production by 2015.*

■ *Recommendation: That farmers who convert to organic farming receive $10/acre to a maximum of $7,500 for each of the three transition years.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF introduce an Organic Mentorship Initiative, with Organic Mentors employed on an outreach basis from the nine SAF regional offices.*

■ *Recommendation: That 75 per cent of the annual certification fees for each organic producer and processor be reimbursed by the Province of Saskatchewan, to a maximum of $750.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF, in consultation with SOD, prepare a communication strategy for implementation of the Canadian Organic Standard that will profile and promote Saskatchewan organic products.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF support the SOD/OACC publication of a new "Saskatchewan (or Prairie) Organic Production Manual" to assist organic farmers with transition, production and marketing.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF expand and maintain its webpage for organic agriculture to include links to OACC, SOD, provincial certification groups and directories of provincial processors, distributors, and farmers' markets.*

■ *Recommendation: That an Organic Agriculture Branch be created within the Development Division of SAF, with its own head and three specialists: Organic Crop Production, Organic Livestock, Organic Processing and Marketing.*

■ *Recommendation: That the province reimburse the cost of meeting HACCP approval for new organic food-processing facilities that are rural, community-based and producer-owned.*

■ *Recommendation: That an Organic Meat Processing Fund be created to provide financial assistance to dedicated or integrated organic meat processing initiatives.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF fully fund an OACC position at the University of Saskatchewan by increasing its funding from $50,000/year over five years to a long-term agreement of $100,000/year over 10 years.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Province fund the creation of an Organic Crop Production Research Chair at the University of Saskatchewan.*

■ *Recommendation: That the College of Agriculture be encouraged to survey prospective, entrant and undergraduate students with the object of offering courses and ultimately, a degree in Organic Agriculture.*

■ *Recommendation: That a plot of land be purchased for the College of Agriculture and Bio-resources that can be the genesis of an exemplary cenre of organic research - amenable to a broad range of organic research: cereal crops, fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, livestock.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Government approve the creation of a Saskatchewan Organic Commission to administer research funding on behalf of the industry.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Government facilitate the delivery of credit courses at Carlton Trail Regional College as a first step toward a Certificate in Organic Agriculture - with present or prospective organic farmers reimbursed for tuition, accommodation and travel costs.*

■ *Recommendation: That SOD be funded to develop units of study in organic food agriculture for implementation in secondary Agriculture and Consumer Education courses and in Elementary (K-5) and Middle Years (6-9) Health curricula.*

■ *Recommendation: That organic agriculture be included as a component of the Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Green Certificate Program.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF provide funding for the development of organic field plots and curriculum materials for Prince Albert's Conservation Learning Centre.*

■ *Recommendation: That we support the development of sustainable agriculture projects (organic field trials, demonstration plots, educational tours) by the Back to the Farm Research Foundation (Davidson).*

■ *Recommendation: That the Department of Agriculture and Food facilitate the development of organic marketing co-operatives through a Processing and Marketing Specialist and the creation of an Organic Co-operatives Fund.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Department of Regional Economic and Co-operative Development develop a template for the creation of organic marketing co-operatives.*

■ *Recommendation: That an Organic Marketing Fund be provided to the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Commission (STEP) to sponsor up to 12 delegates to BioFach and other organic trade fairs, with sponsorship to include 50 per cent of accommodation, travel and display costs.*

■ *Recommendation: That the government provide dedicated funding for a "Nextrade Organics" program to encourage and support the marketing of organic products by small and medium-sized Saskatchewan businesses.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Government design and implement a local procurement campaign for locally grown and organic food in public institutions, beginning with school lunch programs, hospitals, and the legislative cafeteria.*

■ *Recommendation: That a "Saskatchewan Made" or "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign include the promotion of farmers markets and community assisted agriculture.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF develop the capacity to create an interactive website that connects producers and consumers of "Saskatchewan Grown" foods.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Government launch a multi-year "Saskatchewan Made" and "Saskatchewan Grown" campaign, to include radio, newspaper, television and billboard ads, in-store labeling, and slogans that promote Saskatchewan-grown and organic foods.*

■ *Recommendation: That the provincial government, in consultation with municipalities and First Nations, develop incentives to attract new organic farmers and market gardeners, thereby contributing to local food production and rural revitalization.*

■ *Recommendation: That a First Nations Organic Agriculture Committee be formed with representation from FNACS, SOD and SAF to explore the economic possibilities for organic agriculture on First Nations' land.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program identify and invite new citizens who wish to farm organically in our province.*

■ *Recommendation: That SAF and SOD collaborate to create a Saskatchewan Farm Start summer internship program for young people of all cultures who wish to pursue a future in organic farming.*

■ *Recommendation: That the Minister of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food appoint an Organic Advisory Board to provide ongoing advice and direction for the development of organic agriculture in Saskatchewan.*

REFERENCES

Ableman, M. 2005. Fields of Plenty. A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People Who Grow It.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. 1998. The Health of Our Air: Toward sustainable agriculture in Canada. Ottawa.

Akkad, D. April.22 2006. "Growing organic farmers." Monterey Country Herald.

Aristides, A. 1992. "Project for the encouragement of youth to stay in rural areas". Cahiers Options Mediterraneenes, v2, no 2.

Babcock, G. 2006. "Canadians see many benefits of locally grown food." Ipsos Poll. Toronto.

Beingessner, P. 2005. "New Year Country Wears a Little Thin". Column # 507.

Beaudette, L. 2006. Organic Training Needs Assessment Saskatchewan Organic Sector. Sage Management Services. Saskatchewan.

Branosky, E. and S. Greenhalgh. March 2007. Agriculture and Climate Change: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Opportunities and the 2007 Farm Bill. World Resources Institute Policy Note, Climate:Agriculture No.2.

Butala, H. 1996. Home. In: The Middle of Nowhere. Fifth House Ltd. Calgary AB.

Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture and Food. August 2006. Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Environmental Scan

Stier, K.J. Nov.14, 2005. "Ord, Neb., the Latest Success is 20 New Residents" In The New York Times (p.16)

El-Hage Scialabba, N and C. Hattam (eds.). 2002. Organic agriculture, environment and food security. IN: Environment and Natural Resource Series No.4. Rome. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Fulton, M., Olfert, R. and M. Partridge. 2005. Population growth- double or nothing? Preparing for Saskatchewan's next 100 years. Canadian Rural Economy Research Lab. University of Saskatchewan.

Heanue, K. 2002. A strategic approach to rural repopulation: based on the knowledge gained from the ADM Pilot Rural Resettlement Programme, 1999-2000. Area Development Management Ltd.

Hirsch, R.L., Bezdek, R. and R. Wendling. 2005. Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation & Risk Management. PeakOil.com. Available from: http://www.energybulletin.net/4638.html

Kotschi, J and K. Muller-Samann. 2004. The Role of Organic Agriculture in Mitigating Climate Change- a Scoping Study. International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. Germany.

Kunstler, J.H. 2005. The Long Emergency, Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty First Century. New York, Grove Press.

Macy, A. 2006. Certified organic production in Canada 2005. Canadian Organic Growers

Mark, Jason. 2006. "Tax relief for organic growers". Environmental Magazine. Vol. 17, Issue 4. p10.

Millard, G. October 2006. Nextrade Finance: Proposal for the Creation of Nextrade Agriculture.

Morton, R. G. 2005. Growing organic markets. Pages 23-24 *in*: J. A Ivany (ed.) Weed Management in Transition. Topics in Canadian Weed Science, Volume 2. Sainte-Anne-de Bellevue, Quebec: Canadian Weed Science Society.

Orland, K. 2003. Norwegian experience with conversion and support payments for organic farming. In: Organic Agriculture, Sustainability, Markets and Policies. OECD and CABI Publishing. UK.

School and Main Institute. 2003 Youth Investment in Rural Areas Training Packet. Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative.

Statistics Canada. 1991. Census of Agriculture: Selected Data for Saskatchewan Rural Muncipalites. Government of Canada.

Willer, H and M. Yussefi. 2006. The World of Organic Agriculture. Statistics and Emerging Trends. International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), Bonn Germany & Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL), Frick, Switzerland

Referenced Websites

http://www.saskorganic.com/ *(The Saskatchewan Organic Directorate)*
http://www.cog.ca/ *(The Canadian Organic Grower)*
http://www.organicagcentre.ca/ *(Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada)*
http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/ *(Certified Organic Producers of British Columbia)*
http://www.scc.ca/ *(Standards Council of Canada)*
http://www.caaq.org/ *(Conseil des Appelations Agroalimentaires du Quebec)*
http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome *(United States Department of Agriculture)*
http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/polstrat/haccp/haccpe.shtml *(HACCP Canada)*
http://www.agr.gov.sk.ca/ *(Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food)*
http://www.gov.bc.ca/bvprd/bc/channel.do?action=ministry&channelID=-8377&navId=NAV_ID_province *(British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands)*
http://www.agric.gov.ab.ca/app21/rtw/index.jsp *(Alberta Agriculture and Food)*
http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/index.shtml *(Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives)*

http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/index.html *(Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs)*
http://www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/accueil *(Agriculture, Pecheries, et Alimentation)*
http://www.gnb.ca/0027/index-e.asp *(New Brunswick Agriculture and Aquaculture)*
http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/ *(Nova Scotia Agriculture Fisheries and Aquaculture)*
http://www.clubsconseils.org/Accueil/affichage.asp?B=342 *(Clubs Conseils En Agroenvironment)*
http://www.ocia.org/ *(Organic Crop Improvement Association)*
http://www.ocpro.ca/index.php?p=2731 *(Organic Crop Producers & Processors) (OCPP)* of Ontario, Canada Pro-Cert Organic Systems (Pro-Cert) of Saskatchewan, Canada
http://soca.sk.ca/ *(Saskatchewan Organic Certification Association)*
http://www.canorgcoop.ca/ *(Canadian Organic Certification Co-operative)*
http://www.farmstart.ca/index.html (Farm Start)
http://www.craftontario.ca/ (CRAFT Ontario)
http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca/ (Falls Brook Centre)
http://www.ecologicalsolutions.com.au/crystalwaters/overview/overview.html (Crystal Waters Village)
http://www.craikecovillage.ca/ (Craik Ecovillage)
http://www.rural.gc.ca/dialogue/report/ns/youth_e.phtml (Canadian Rural Partnership Rural Dialogue. Government of Canada)
http://www.statcan.ca/english/agcensus2006/index.htm (2006 Canadian Agriculture Census)
http://www.statcan.ca/english/agcensus2001/index.htm (2001 Canadian Agriculture Census)
http://www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa/services/corporate-ownership.html (Organic Indsustry Stucture)
http://www.nfu.ca/youth/land/registry.html (National Farmers Union Land Registry)
http://www.foodanddrinkeurope.com/news/ng.asp?n=72092&m=1FDEN16&c=gnuihkhnrtcxmni%20 (Global organic sales soar but supply is strained) Global organic sales soar but supply is strained
http://www.organicagcentre.ca/Docs/RetailSalesOrganic_Canada2006.pdf
http://www.worldwatch.org/node/827

APPENDIX A: CONTACTS • EVENTS • INTERVIEWS

Date	Location	Group/Individual	Notes
August 5/06	Raymore, SK	SOCA Field Tour	Held at Harvey Buhr's farm
August 11/06	Moose Jaw, SK	Organic Forum Meeting	SOD members and Gov't reps
August 21/06	Davidson, SK	Elmer Laird- Organic Elder	Tour of organic demonstration farm
August 21/06	Kenaston, SK	Sharon and Arnold Taylor	Past SOD President and organic farmers
August 22/06	Rockglen, SK	Debbie and Ian Miller, organic farmers	Active organic voice, manager of OCIA Canada
August 22/06	Gravelbourg, SK	Judy Reiman and a group of area organic farmers	
August 28/06	Kelvington, SK	Canadian Organic Livestock Association	Carol and John Lowndes and a few other organic farmers
August 29/06	Saskatoon, SK	Institute of Agricultural Rural and Environmental Health	Leanne Labrash
August 29/06	Saskatoon, SK	Saskatoon Food Centre	Tour and meeting with Carmen Ly
August 29/06	Saskatoon, SK	POS Pilot Plant	Tour and presentation
August 30/06	Regina, SK	Crop Insurance reps	Regarding organic payments
September 10/06	Charlottetown, PEI	Margie Loo	Organic farmer
September 13/06	Truro, NS	Ralph Martin, Director	Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada
September 21/06	Craik, SK	Canadian Organic Certification Co-operative	Met with key members

Date	Location	Group/Individual	Notes
September 25/06	Birch Hills, SK	Blake and Shane Hunter and Laura	Young enthusiastic organic farmers
September 26/06	Speers, SK	Dayton and Carol Funk	Involved in a number of organic organizations
September 26/06	Maymont, SK	Northwest Organic Co-operative	Flour mill tour and member meeting
October 6/06	Humboldt, SK	Carlton Trail Regional College	Marlene Luneng and Rob Barber
October 6/06	Marysburg, SK	Ray and Vicky Bauml	Pioneer organic farmer (OCIA chapter 5)
October 12/6	Regina, SK	Jason Freeman	Grower Direct
October 14/06	Prince Albert, SK	Youth Forum On Sustainability	Presented on organics
October 16/06	Saskatoon, SK	Wally Hamm	OCPP/Pro-Cert Canada
October 16/06	Saskatoon, SK	Jennifer Evancio and Dale Botting	Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership
October 17/06	Tisdale, SK	SOCA/Ecocert, Rusty Plamondon	Also met with Norman and Joanie Bromm
October 17/06	White Fox, SK	Paul L'Heureux	Retired teacher and organic farmer
October 19/06	Laird, SK	Kalissa and Ted Regier (Father)	Young enthusiastic farmer in transition
October 24/6	Zenon Park, SK	Poplar Valley Organic Farms (Club Organic) with Celine Favreau	Global company based in Sask
October 30/06	Regina, SK	Joy Smith Senior Policy Analyst	Involved with the Organic Commission
November 2/06	Regina, SK	Donna Youngdahl	Organic file for the CWB

Date	Location	Group/Individual	Notes
November 9/06	Wakaw, SK	Yvonne Choquette, Land Owner	Interested in organic farming and processing
November 12/06	Saskatoon, SK	Organic Connections Conference	Presentations/Trade Show
November 23/06	Prince Albert, SK	Conservation Learning Centre Board	Presented a proposal for an organic presence
November 25/06	Blaine Lake, SK	OCIA Chapter 2	General Meeting
December 12/06	Melfort, SK	Mel Annand	Director of the Saskatchewan Fruit Growers Association
December 13/06	Marcelin, SK	The Dagenais Family Farm	Organic farmers with one son moving onto the family farm
January 10/07	Regina, SK	Saskatchewan Organic Commission	
January 15/07	Radville, SK	Prairie Heritage Seeds- Galarneau Organic Farms	Founding members of OCIA Chapter 1 and successful organic crop processors and marketers
January 15/07	Weyburn, SK	Ian Cushon	Long time organic farmer
January 19/07	Saskatoon, SK	Lorraine Beaudette Sage Management Services	Author of the Organic Training Needs Assessment
January 26-28/07	Guelph, ON	Guelph Organic Conference	
February 9/07	University of Copenhagen, Denmark	Sofie Kobayashi	Denmark Research School for Organic Farming
February 6/07	Samso, Denmark	Meeting with organic farmer, Eric Olson	

Date	Location	Group/Individual	Notes
February 15 -18/07	Nuremberg, Germany	BioFach	World Organic Trade Fair
March 5/07	Conference Call	SOD	Regarding the Green Initiative Funding
March 5/07	Conference Call	SOD	Regarding the Green Initiative Funding
March 29/07	Regina, SK	Saskatchewan Organic Commission with Minister Wartman	
April 18/07	Regina, SK	Jennifer Evancio STEP	
May 23/07	St. Brieux, SK	Joseph Bourgault, Canadian Organic Alliance	Business owner with a strong interest in organic agriculture

Organic Industry Structure:
Significant Acquisitions
January 2007
Smart Balance/ Earth Balance
Boulder Specialty Brands
Stonyfield Farm
Brown Cow
Danone (France) #81
Annie's Naturals
Solera Capital
Annie's Homegrown
Fantastic Foods
Consorzio
After the Fall
R.W. Knudsen
Santa Cruz Organic
J.M. Smucker #43
American Capital Strat. Ltd.
Booth Creek Mgmt. Corp.
Petaluma/ Rosie
Hans'
Coleman
Swift & Co. #10
Sunspire
O'Coco's
MaraNatha
nSpired Natural Foods
Cloud Nine
Ahlfaska
Tropical Source
Charles-bank
Aurora
Weetabix
Barbara's Bakery
Weetabix (UK)
Vitasoy (Hong Kong)
Nasoya
Azumaya
Kerry Group (Ireland)
Oregon Chai
Pulmuone (Korea)
Midwest Harvest
Wildwood
SoyUm
Sunrich
Kettle Valley
Sun Opta (Canada)
MU
Dakota Gourmet
Green & Black's
Cadbury Schweppes (UK)
Mott's Organic
Nantucket Nectars Organic
Iowa Farm Bureau
TerraTerra Food Capital*
Tanimura and Antle
Grimm-way
Cal-Organic
Natural Selection Foods/ Earthbound
Vermont Bread Co.
Adams Baking
Charter-house Group, Inc.
Rudi's Organic Bakery
Kettle Foods
Lion Capital (UK)
Food Processors*
Investment Firms
Organic Brand Acquisitions
Organic Brand Introductions
Phil Howard, Assistant Professor
Dept. of Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies
Michigan State University
*Investors include the State of Iowa, Pioneer, DuPont and ADM
www.certifiedorganic.bc.ca/rcbtoa